

Wildland Fire Management: The National Fire Plan

In 2000, at the request of the President, the Secretaries of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior (DOI) prepared a report recommending how to respond to severe, ongoing fire activity, reduce impacts of fires on rural communities and the environment, and ensure sufficient firefighting resources in the future. The report, *Managing the Impacts of Wildfire on Communities and the Environment: A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000*, became known as the "National Fire Plan." In FY 2001, the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior joined the governors and other partners in developing the *10-Year Comprehensive Strategy* and its subsequent Implementation Plan in 2002.

In August of 2002, the President's *Healthy Forests Initiative* provided additional tools and emphasis to facilitate more timely decisions to implement core components of the National Fire Plan and the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy. This effort culminated in the enactment of the *Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003*. All the reports, guidance and legislative assistance are now in place, incorporated under the concepts of the National Fire Plan, to reduce the devastation of severe wildland fire and improve the health of the Nation's forests and rangelands.

Three Years of NFP Implementation - The Plan represents a long-term commitment and investment to help protect communities, natural resources, and most importantly, the lives of firefighters and the public. This long-term commitment is shared among Federal agencies, States, local governments, Tribes, and interested publics. Collaboration, priority setting, and accountability are the guiding principles that will ensure the continued success of the Plan.

Since the inception of the Plan, the five Federal wildland fire management agencies (the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service in the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture) have made significant progress in creating a seamless fire protection response. Congress has supported this effort by providing funds to: increase firefighting capabilities; reduce the amount of hazardous fuels with special emphasis on areas around communities; increase fire-related research; increase State and local fire prevention and firefighting programs; increase economic development through contracting; restore fire damaged lands; and improve accountability for the resources used in fighting wildland fires.

Firefighting Challenges - In recent years, the Nation has endured extreme fire behavior on a multi-state scale, with fires burning record amounts of wildlands, destroying significant numbers of homes, and resulting in incalculable losses of natural resource values and amenities. The combined effects of long-term drought, large amounts of hazardous and volatile fuels, numerous ignitions, and growing populations in the wildland urban interface, have resulted in record-breaking levels of fire activity.

The severity of the last two fire seasons demonstrated again the extent of the problem and continuing dangers posed by wildfires in fire-dependent rangeland and forest ecosystems. In 2003, the Departments jointly spent over \$1.35 billion in emergency suppression funds fighting fires that burned more than 3.9 million acres. More than 4,000 homes were lost to wildfire.

Most tragically, the fires of 2003 resulted in 22 civilian fatalities in addition to 31 firefighters, who lost their lives while protecting homes, communities and our natural resources. Another 14 persons perished in subsequent mudslides from the burned-over steep slopes in Southern California.

Even with the devastation of the last several years, the Federal wildland fire management agencies demonstrated the positive results of years of coordinating their suppression resources. Combined with State and local resources, the five agencies provided the public with an effective and seamless firefighting effort. Firefighters protected thousands of homes, businesses and other structures threatened by large fires. Of the 17,817 fires reported on public lands in 2003, only 437 escaped to become large fires covering 300 acres or more – a 97.5% success rate.

Ultimately, measures to reduce fuels buildups and protect communities provide the best long term way of fighting wildland fires and their attendant costs. To this end, the agencies significantly reduced the risk associated with uncontrolled wildfires by treating hazardous fuels on more than 2.7 million high priority acres and, by using naturally occurring fire, to reduce fuels on another 719,624 acres.

10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan - In 2001, the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior joined State governors and other partners in developing the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy. A broad collaborative group representing Federal agencies, States, local governments, conservation and commodity groups, and tribal interests, developed this long-term strategy for the National Fire Plan. It is the first national long-term comprehensive strategy for wildland fire management.

The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and its Implementation Plan provide for long-term implementation of NFP objectives and the *Healthy Forests Restoration Act* purposes and expand the original emphasis from a Federally-oriented solution to one that includes input and support from many participants, including local, State, tribal governments, and non-governmental organizations. Key to the success of the Implementation Plan is early and frequent collaboration among all parties at the local level. By early 2004, 107 of the 168 actions items set forth in the plan were completed.

The four goals of the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy are:

- Improve fire prevention and suppression;
- Reduce hazardous fuels;
- Restore fire-adapted ecosystems; and
- Promote community assistance.

Three major principles guided the development of the 10-Year Plan:

- Priority setting that emphasizes the protection of communities and other high-priority watersheds at-risk;
- Collaboration among governments and broadly representative stakeholders; and
- Accountability through performance measures and monitoring for results.

Wildland Fire Leadership Council- In April 2002, the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior commissioned the Wildland Fire Leadership Council. It is governed by the USDA Under

Secretary - Natural Resources and the Environment, the DOI Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget, the DOI Assistant Secretary – Lands and Minerals Management, the Chief of the Forest Service, and the DOI Directors of the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Association of State Foresters, Inter-Tribal Timber Council, National Association of Counties, and the Western Governors Association. The Council functions as a board of directors to ensure that Federal wildland fire policy is carried out in a unified, seamless manner. The first Chair of the Council, Chief Bosworth of the Forest Service, provided the initial leadership in establishing WFLC as an executive oversight and policy setting group. In June of 2003, the Council Chair rotated to the Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget. Council representatives meet quarterly to address pertinent management coordination and policy issues. The Council is dedicated to achieving consistent implementation of the goals, actions, and policies of the National Fire Plan, the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan, the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and the *Healthy Forests Restoration Act*.

The heads of the five wildland fire management agencies have resolved several key issues such as common performance measures, common fire cost accounting protocols, and seamless direction for an effective hazardous fuel reduction program.

2003 National Fire Plan Progress

In 2003, accomplishments included:

Operational Improvement for Greater Program Efficiencies

Agencies:

- Finalized a formal memorandum of understanding between the States, DOI, and USDA that sets priorities for hazardous fuels reduction projects;
- Joined with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Association of State Foresters in an agreement to improve and standardize grant administration and application review process for awards to rural and volunteer fire departments for equipment, training, and prevention;
- Improved aircraft operations based on the report of a blue ribbon panel;
- Continued development of a new interagency fire preparedness planning system to determine optimal and cost effective deployment of firefighting resources;
- Standardized accounting practices for firefighter base pay costs;
- Developed a new fire incident cost-coding system to allow the aggregation of the costs of all the fire agencies related to specific wildfires in a consistent and comparable manner;
- Standardized definitions and accounting practices for emergency stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration across the five agencies;

Firefighting

Agencies:

- Hired, maintained, and trained a wildland fire management workforce of 15,798 personnel.
- Provided a firefighting fleet of 1,776 engines, 138 helicopters, 164 dozers, and 144 water/foam tenders.
- Increased interagency fire training at development centers in California, Arizona, and Florida with nearly 800 participants completing training.

- Continued construction and maintenance on 171 facilities including crew quarters, air tanker bases, helibases, offices and fire stations.

Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation

Agencies:

- Stabilized slopes with log structures, straw wattles, and straw mulch; installed larger culverts to handle increased water flows; and reseeded burned areas on 536 emergency stabilization projects in 21 states covering 2,471,779 acres and 3,226 miles of roads, trails, and streams.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Agencies:

- Treated over 2.7 million acres of Federal land and adjacent lands
- Treated nearly 1.6 million acres in wildland urban interface areas
- Treated 719,624 acres through wildland fire use
- Treated 461,940 acres by mechanical means, 2,036,561 acres with prescribed fire, and 213,681 by other means.

Community Assistance

The Federal government:

- Funded 6,800 mitigation and education campaigns, 1,200 community fire protection/mitigation plans, and 4,500 hazardous fuels mitigation projects.
- Increased firefighting capacity by providing technical assistance, training, supplies, and equipment to communities.
- Provided educational support to 7,731 volunteer/rural fire departments that serve over 13,000 communities,
- Conducted 14 national and 500 community FIREWISE workshops to help communities reduce risks in fire-prone areas.

Fire Research

- 78 Forest Service research teams continued to study the various aspects of wildland fire management including firefighter and public safety, fire weather and behavior, smoke dispersion, and post-fire susceptibility to invasive species.
- The Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) and the U.S. Forest Service hosted three workshops focused on bringing fire managers and researchers together to discuss information needs, identify knowledge gaps, and pinpoint needed research. The JFSP funded 54 new research projects in support of hazardous fuels reduction, post-fire rehabilitation, and smoke management. In addition, the JFSP funded three national demonstration projects to help local agency managers solve complex fuels hazard reduction and rehabilitation problems.
- Examples of tools generated by JFSP research teams include: integrated fire and weather maps to generate 3- to 12-month fire forecasts; imagery-based, burn-severity maps used by Burned Area Emergency Response teams; and a fiberboard structural product made from low- or no-value material obtained from hazardous fuels treatments.

Increased Contracting and Jobs

Agencies:

- Established objectives to significantly increase the level of funds for contracting of hazardous fuels projects, emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, and firefighting preparedness and suppression. Both Departments are committed to a goal of applying 50% of fuels reduction project funding to private sector contractors.
- Initiated 433 contractual actions totaling more than \$173 million.

2004 Strategic Initiatives

Initiatives for 2004 include:

- Completion of an Interagency Cohesive Fuels Strategy for hazardous fuels reduction;
- Development of strategies to recruit and retain qualified firefighters, especially for key field leadership positions.
- Implementation of cost containment strategies for large fire suppression identified by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council.
- Expanded use of stewardship contracting authority to remove small diameter material, improve forest health, and stimulate local economic opportunities.
- Use of the categorical exclusions (CE) to result in savings of both time and money in meeting NEPA's environmental impact analysis requirements for fuels projects. Under the Healthy Forests Initiative, the Departments of Agriculture and Interior developed CE for certain kinds of hazardous fuels projects. More resources will be available to remove hazardous fuels from the land and help shorten the time between project initiation and project completion.
- Implementation of emergency stabilization treatments on lands that were severely burned in 2003 and rehabilitate lands that were severely burned in the fires of 2002 and 2003.
- Completion of the LANDFIRE pilot projects to obtain finer resolution data on fuels conditions for project planning and priority setting in Montana and Utah and expand to other States in the West.
- Improvement of fire incident obligation reporting among all Federal wildland fire management agencies by using the newly-developed FireCode system for uniform coding of costs for fire suppression actions.

2005 Management Emphases

Looking to 2005, the agencies plan to:

- Begin testing the new preparedness planning module of the interagency Fire Program Analysis System to optimize cost effectiveness for fire readiness resources.
- Begin to implement large landscape level fuels treatment projects to reduce the threat to communities and restore healthy ecosystems.
- Implement emergency stabilization treatments on lands that were severely burned in 2004 and rehabilitate lands that were severely burned in the fires of 2003 and 2004.
- Implement provisions of the *Healthy Forests Restoration Act Of 2003* to restore forest and rangeland health and prevent catastrophic wildfires on public lands through active land management efforts and facilitated administrative processes.
- Coordinate with the Office of Management and Budget to improve the two Departments' Wildland Fire Management Program performance assessment scores initially assigned in FY 2002.

- Expand forest health protection and biomass utilization projects that support the fuels treatment program.
- Maintain high level of research in support of firefighting capacity, forest and rangeland rehabilitation and restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, and community assistance.
- Improve communications with States, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure collaboration on National Fire Plan projects and actions undertaken by Federal agencies and their partners.
- Promote accountability for National Fire Plan funding and accomplishments.

2005 Budget Highlights

The budget request for 2005 continues to reflect the President's concern about the vulnerability of people and their property to the destruction caused by unwanted and uncontrolled wildfires. The President's Budget proposes an increase of \$116.9 million for fire suppression, 14.8 percent more than the 2004 budget, to fund suppression operations at the 10-year average.

The budget supports the recent enactment of the *Healthy Forests Restoration Act* by adding \$31.5 million for hazardous fuels reduction in the National Fire Plan. These funds will be used to treat 2.2 million acres and improve the monitoring of projects after monitoring protocols are developed in 2004.

On the following pages are tables that summarize the estimated and proposed funding for the National Fire Plan and common performance measure 2003 accomplishments and 2004 and 2005 targets.

Summary of Funding for the National Fire Plan Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, 2003-2005 (Dollars in Thousands)

Agency / Program	2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	2005 Budget Request	2005 vs. 2004
Department of the Interior				
Preparedness	275,411	274,303	283,018	+8,715
Readiness	255,169	254,180	262,644	+8,464
Facility Construction and Maintenance	12,294	12,222	12,374	+152
Fire Research and Technology	7,948	7,901	8,000	+99
Suppression Operations	159,309	192,903	221,523	+28,620
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	185,627	183,896	209,282	+25,386
Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)	111,178	109,884	135,116	+25,232
Non-WUI	74,449	74,012	74,166	+154
Burned Area Rehabilitation	19,870	24,198	24,276	+78
State and Local Assistance	9,935	9,877	5,000	-4,877
Rural Fire Assistance	9,935	9,877	5,000	-4,877

Subtotal, current year	650,152	685,177	743,099	+57,922
Emergency supplemental	225,000	98,416	0	-98,416
SUBTOTAL, DOI	875,152	783,593	743,099	-40,494
Department of Agriculture				
Preparedness	643,070	701,547	685,588	-15,959
Readiness	611,996	671,621	658,227	-5,394
Facility Construction and Maintenance	1,838	0	0	+0
Fire Research and Technology	29,236	29,926	27,361	-2,565
Suppression Operations	417,964	597,130	685,400	+88,270
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	226,626	258,332	266,238	+7,906
Burned Area Rehabilitation	7,078	6,914	3,000	-3,914
State and Local Assistance	126,663	147,166	85,003	-62,163
Forest Health Management	16,824	24,692	12,653	-12,039
Economic Action Program	4,968	0	0	+0
State Fire Assistance	91,738	109,299	59,307	-49,992
Volunteer Fire Assistance	13,193	13,175	13,043	-132
Subtotal, current year	1,431,401	1,711,089	1,725,229	+14,140
Emergency supplemental	889,000	299,224	0	-299,224
SUBTOTAL, USDA	2,320,401	2,010,313	1,725,229	-285,084
USDA and DOI				
Preparedness	918,481	975,850	968,606	-7,244
Readiness	867,165	925,801	920,871	-5,070
Facility Construction and Maintenance	14,132	12,222	12,374	+152
Fire Research and Technology	37,184	37,827	35,361	-2,466
Suppression Operations	577,273	790,033	906,923	+116,890
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	422,253	442,228	475,520	+33,292
Burned Area Rehabilitation	26,948	31,112	27,276	-3,836
State and Local Assistance	136,658	157,043	90,003	-67,040
Rural Fire Assistance	9,935	9,877	5,000	-4,877
Forest Health Management	16,824	24,692	12,653	-12,039
Economic Action Program	4,968	0	0	+0
State Fire Assistance ^e	91,738	109,299	59,307	-49,992
Volunteer Fire Assistance	13,193	13,175	13,043	-132
Subtotal, current year	2,081,613	2,396,266	2,468,328	+72,062
Emergency supplemental	1,114,000	397,640	0	-397,640
TOTAL, USDI and USDA	3,195,613	2,793,906	2,468,328	-325,578

**National Fire Plan
Common Performance Measures
Departments of the Interior and Agriculture FY 2003 - 2005**

Performance Measure	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Estimate	FY 2005 Request
Percent of unplanned and unwanted fires controlled during initial attack	97.5%	98%	98%
Gross fire suppression cost per acre *	<u>\$1,326,940,000</u> 3,959,223 acres = \$335	<u>\$790,033,000</u> 4,797,962 acres = \$165*	<u>\$906,923,000</u> 4,797,962 acres = \$189*
Number of high-priority acres treated in the WUI	1,594,216	1,332,000	1,477,000
Number of acres in condition class 2 or 3 treated outside the WUI in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3	293,127 FS <u>468,288 DOI</u> 761,415 total	259,000 FS <u>440,000 DOI</u> 699,000 total	300,000 FS <u>440,000 DOI</u> 740,000 total
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class	244,111 FS <u>279,188 DOI</u> 523,299 total	253,000 FS <u>280,000 DOI</u> 533,000 total	264,000 FS <u>285,000 DOI</u> 549,000 total
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class per million dollars gross investment	1,371 FS 3,222 DOI	1,371 FS 3,783 DOI	1,371 FS 3,843 DOI

* 2004 suppression cost per acre is the appropriation divided by the 10-year average number of acres burned. 2005 estimates is the budget request divided by the 10-year average number of acres burned.

Wildland Fire Management

APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE SHEET

For necessary expenses for fire preparedness, suppression operations, fire science and research, emergency rehabilitation, hazardous fuels reduction, and rural fire assistance by the Department of the Interior, [\$792,725,000] \$743,099,000, to remain available until expended, of which not to exceed \$12,374,000 shall be for the renovation or construction of fire facilities: *Provided*, That such funds are also available for repayment of advances to other appropriation accounts from which funds were previously transferred for such purposes: *Provided further*, That persons hired pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 1469 may be furnished subsistence and lodging without cost from funds available from this appropriation: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding 42 U.S.C. 1856d, sums received by a bureau or office of the Department of the Interior for fire protection rendered pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1856 et seq., protection of United States property, may be credited to the appropriation from which funds were expended to provide that protection, and are available without fiscal year limitation: [*Provided further*, That of the funds provided, \$99,000,000 is to repay prior year advances from other appropriations from which funds were transferred for wildfire suppression and emergency rehabilitation activities: *Provided further*, That this additional amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 502 of H. Con. Res. 95 (108th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2004:] *Provided further*, That using the amounts designated under this title of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior may enter into procurement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements, for hazardous fuels reduction activities, and for training and monitoring associated with such hazardous fuels reduction activities, on Federal land, or on adjacent non-Federal land for activities that benefit resources on Federal land: *Provided further*, That the costs of implementing any cooperative agreement between the Federal Government and any non-Federal entity may be shared, as mutually agreed on by the affected parties: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding requirements of the Competition in Contracting Act, *but subject to any such requirements as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget may prescribe*, the Secretary, for purposes of hazardous fuels reduction activities, may obtain maximum practicable competition among: (A) local private, nonprofit, or cooperative entities; (B) Youth Conservation Corps

crews or related partnerships with state, local, or non-profit youth groups; (C) small or micro-businesses; or (D) other entities that will hire or train locally a significant percentage, defined as 50 percent or more, of the project workforce to complete such contracts: *Provided further*, That in implementing this section, the Secretary shall develop written guidance to field units to ensure accountability and consistent application of the authorities provided herein: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated under this head may be used to reimburse the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service for the costs of carrying out their responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) to consult and conference, as required by section 7 of such Act in connection with wildland fire management activities: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of the Interior may use wildland fire appropriations to enter into non-competitive sole source leases of real property with local governments, at or below fair market value, to construct capitalized improvements for fire facilities on such leased properties, including but not limited to fire guard stations, retardant stations, and other initial attack and fire support facilities, and to make advance payments for any such lease or for construction activity associated with the lease: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize the transfer of funds appropriated for wildland fire management, in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$12,000,000, between the Departments when such transfers would facilitate and expedite jointly funded wildland fire management programs and projects: *Provided further*, That funds provided for wildfire suppression shall be available for support of Federal emergency response actions. (*Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2004.*)

Justification of changes to appropriation language

Deletion: *“Provided further, That of the funds provided, \$99,000,000 is to repay prior year advances from other appropriations from which funds were transferred for wildfire suppression and emergency rehabilitation activities: Provided further, That this additional amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 502 of H. Con. Res. 95 (108th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2004.”*

Justification: This funding is not required because Congress provided funds to repay the costs of 2003 fire suppression in the 2004 appropriation for Interior and Related Agencies P.L. 108-8).

Addition: *“...but subject to any such requirements as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget may exercise,”*

Justification: The Office of Management and Budget may establish guidelines to ensure compliance with appropriate Federal regulations.

Deletion: *“Provided further, That the Secretary of the Interior may use wildland fire appropriations to enter into non-competitive sole source leases of real property with local governments, at or below fair market value, to construct capitalized improvements for fire facilities on such leased properties, including but not limited to fire guard stations, retardant stations, and other initial attack and fire support facilities, and to make advance payments for any such lease or for construction activity associated with the lease.”*

Justification: The Administration does not support the provision allowing for non-competitive sole source leasing of fire facilities on non-federal lands. This is inconsistent with the Administration's general goal of promoting competition and would likely create an indirect subsidization of local community infrastructure at the expense of fire program needs. Moreover, it would likely become impossible over time to actually measure this subsidy.

Deletion: *“Provided further, That the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize the transfer of funds appropriated for wildland fire management, in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$12,000,000, between the Departments when such transfers would facilitate and expedite jointly funded wildland fire management programs and projects.”*

Justification: The Administration does not support this provision at this time because of concern about the potential impact of such changes on the integrity of the budget process, existing accounting practices, and the link between budget and performance. The Departments will review current policies and procedures regarding sharing of agency resources, including reimbursement practices and will advise Congress as to any need for legislative remedies, should it be determined that changes are needed.

Deletion: *“Provided further, That funds provided for wildfire suppression shall be available for support of Federal emergency response actions”*

Justification: This provision is not necessary because this authority is provided in Sections 101 and 102 of the General Provisions. Furthermore, extraordinary costs incurred by the Department in assisting the Federal Emergency Management Agency are reimbursed by that Agency.

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

Appropriation Language Citations:

16 U.S.C. 1; 16 U.S.C. 594; 16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee; 42 U.S.C. 1856; 42 U.S.C. 5121; 16 U.S.C. 3101; 43 U.S.C. 1469; 43 U.S.C. 1748; 25 U.S.C. 3101; P. L. 93-638; P. L. 103-413; P.L. 104-208; P.L. 105-83; P.L. 106-113; P.L. 106-291; P.L. 107-56; P.L. 107-234; P.L. 108-7; P.L. 108-108

The National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1) provides basic authority for fire protection and suppression on National Park System lands.

The Timber Protection Act of 1922 (16 U.S.C. 594) provides for mutual aid in fire protection.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) constituted an "Organic Act" for the National Wildlife Refuge System by providing guidelines and directives for administration and management of all areas in the system, including "wildlife refuges, areas for the protection and conservation of fish and wildlife that are threatened with extinction, wildlife ranges, wildlife management areas, and waterfowl production areas."

The Reciprocal Fire Protection Agreement Act of 1955 (42 U.S.C. 1856) provides authority for mutual aid in fire protection and allows for emergency assistance in the vicinity of agency facilities in extinguishing fire when no agreement exists.

The Disaster Relief Act of May 22, 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5121) authorizes Federal agencies to assist State and local governments during emergencies or major disasters by direction of the President.

The Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act of 1971, as amended by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (16 U.S.C. 3101 et. seq.) provides that as long as there are no substantial revenues from those lands, Alaska Native Corporation lands will receive wildland fire protection services from the U.S. at no cost.

The National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 3101) provides BIA with authority for fire protection and suppression on Indian Trust Lands.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1748), as amended, provides for protection of public lands and resources from destruction by fire.

43 U.S.C. 1469 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to perform work occasioned by emergencies.

The Tribal-Self Governance Act of 1994, P. L. 103-413, establishes a program with DOI known as tribal "self-governance", authorizing the compacting of the Department of the Interior programs.

Section 102 of the General Provisions of the Annual Appropriations Act for the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies authorizes the Secretary to transfer funds

from other Department accounts for the suppression or emergency prevention of forest or range fires on or threatening the public lands and for the rehabilitation of burned lands.

OTHER PROGRAM GUIDANCE

In addition to the legislative basis for the wildland fire management program, several major program evaluations, listed below, completed in recent years or being conducted today have contributed to the framework for implementation of the National Fire Plan.

- National Fire Plan (“A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000, September 8, 2000”).
- National Academy of Public Administration “Study of the Implementation of the Federal Wildland Fire Policy”, December 2000.
- Federal Wildland Fire Policy, as amended, 2001.
- 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy: A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, August 2001.
- National Academy of Public Administration, “Managing Wildland Fire, Enhancing Capacity to Implement the Federal Interagency Policy, December 2001.
- DOI Rural Fire Assistance Program Evaluation, January 2002.
- General Accounting Office Report 02-259, “Severe Wildland Fires: Leadership and Accountability Needed to Reduce Risks to Communities and Resources”, February 2002.
- Interagency Acquisition and Assistance Program Evaluation, March 2002.
- General Accounting Office Report 02-158, “Wildland Fire Management: Improved Planning Will Help Agencies Better Identify Fire-Fighting Preparedness Needs”, March 2002.
- Implementation Plan for the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy: A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, May 2002.
- National Academy of Public Administration, “Wildfire Suppression: Strategies for Containing Costs”, September 2002.
- Blue Ribbon Aviation Panel Report, “Federal Aerial Firefighting: Assessing Safety and Effectiveness”, December 2002.
- OMB Performance Assessment Rating Tools, September 2002.
- General Accounting Office, GAO-03-1047, “Geospatial Information, Technologies Hold Promise for Wildland Fire Management, but Challenges Remain”, September 2003.
- General Accounting Office, GAO-03-430, “Wildland Fires, Better Information Needed on Effectiveness of Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation”, April 2003.
- General Accounting Office Report 03-805, “Wildland Fire Management: Additional Actions Required to Better Identify and Prioritize Lands Needing Fuels Reduction”, August 2003.
- National Academy of Public Administration, “Containing Wildland Fire Costs: Improving Equipment and Services Acquisition”, September 2003.
- National Academy of Public Administration, “Containing Wildland Fire Costs: Utilizing Local Firefighting Forces”, December 2003.

OVERVIEW OF THE FY 2005 BUDGET REQUEST

The Wildland Fire Management (WFM) appropriation provides the Department's funding for performing the wildland fire prevention, suppression, and rehabilitation activities of the National Fire Plan (NFP). The program supports two of the mission goals of the Department Strategic Plan, Serving Communities and Resource Protection. WFM activities are performed by four of the DOI bureaus, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the National Park Service (NPS), and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The Office of Wildland Coordination (OWFC) coordinates the Department's NFP efforts among the Interior bureaus and with other agencies. Multi-bureau operational programs are managed by the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC). Interior's major partner in the NFP is the USDA Forest Service. The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC), consisting of high-level Federal, State, and county officials, and other non-Federal partners, provides policy guidance for the NFP participating agencies.

The WFM program serves communities by reducing hazardous fuels and improving the management of wildland fires. The people, resources, and property of many communities, especially in the West, are threatened by conditions that are conducive to catastrophic wildfires: dangerous fuel loads in forests, increasing human habitation in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), high temperatures, and persistent drought. Through this program, the Department cooperates with its Federal, State, and local partners to reduce the levels of hazardous fuels, prepare for and respond to wildfires, suppress and contain unwanted and unplanned fires, and stabilize areas that have suffered damage from the wildfires.

The program supports the Departmental goal of Resource Protection by reducing hazardous fuels outside the WUI and beginning the restoration of burned areas into fire-adapted areas. The buildup of hazardous fuels on an estimated 190 million acres of lands under Federal management not only presents imminent danger to WUI communities, but also sets the stage for the devastation of the land and the valuable natural resources found there. The Department's Hazardous Fuels Reduction program devotes about 35 percent of its funding to reduce hazardous fuels on those non-WUI lands by forest thinning, prescribed fire, and wildland fire use. Lands that have been devastated by catastrophic wildfire are sometimes unable to return to fire-adapted conditions without human intervention, therefore, the Department has a program for burned area rehabilitation that begins the process of returning the severely burned areas to fire-adapted conditions, using native and other desirable plant species.

The program improvements identified in this request can be accommodated by a funding level that is \$57.9 million over the 2004 Wildland Fire Management appropriation. The 2005 requested increases provide \$2.7 million for uncontrollable pay and related cost changes and address these significant priorities:

- Continuing to fund emergency suppression and stabilization operations at the 10-year average annual cost from 1994 through 2003 (+\$28.6 million);
- Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of future hazardous fuels reduction treatments by devoting more attention and resources to post-treatment monitoring and reporting of results (+\$8.0 million);
- Expanding hazardous fuels reduction project funding with a focus on treatments in the wildland urban interface (+\$12.8 million);

- Developing fire program planning and analysis capability uniformly across all fire management agencies and bureaus in the areas of extended attack, fuels management, and rehabilitation (+\$2.9 million);
- Improving firefighter and public health and safety through aviation improvements recommended by a blue ribbon panel (+\$3.3 million);
- Developing finer-scale maps of fuels conditions, wildfire risks, and vegetation to provide a scientific database to gauge fuels conditions, more precisely target future fuels treatment and fire preparedness decisions, and provide a tool for performance measurement and greater accountability (+\$3.7 million); and,
- Reducing Rural Fire Assistance grants to focus on key DOI-specific community-based projects and target program funds to avoid overlap with USDA and FEMA programs (-\$4.9 million).

An estimated 190 million acres of Federal land are in danger of catastrophic wildfire. In 2003 over 3.9 million acres burned, at a cost of more than \$1.3 billion to control. Interior's share of that cost was \$304 million.

The continued buildup of hazardous fuels in forests and rangelands, the ongoing migration of human populations into the wildland urban interface, and extended drought throughout much of the country, particularly in the West, will continue to present extraordinary fire risks. The long-term solution is to direct resources to activities that will address the buildup of hazardous fuels in forests and rangelands. Treatments to reduce hazardous fuels in forests and rangelands not only reduce the risk of catastrophic fire; treatments reduce the negative economic impacts to communities by reducing the likelihood of fire damage and the severity of damage from fires that do occur. Furthermore, it is not necessary to treat every acre to protect a forest or range area from uncontrolled fire. Strategically selected acreage can be treated to reduce the risk of damaging fire from much larger areas. In addition, the Administration is working with Congress to find ways such as stewardship contracting, categorical exclusion, and biomass utilization to further reduce the Federal costs for fuels treatment.

This account is in compliance with the Section 343 provision of the 2004 appropriation act. The Department has been rigorous in preventing the emergency funding provided in the Wildland Fire Management appropriations from being charged for overhead costs. Funds for the non-emergency aspects of the WFM do contribute (up to a maximum of 10%) to the bureaus for their costs for providing support services to the program. A full discussion on Section 343 compliance follows at the end of this account section.

Summary of Total Request
(dollars in thousands)

Budget Authority	2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	2005 Request	2005 Request Change from 2004	
				Amount	Percent
Preparedness	275,411	274,303	283,018	+8,715	+3.2%
Suppression	159,309	192,903	221,523	+28,620	+14.8%
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	185,627	183,896	209,282	+25,386	+13.8%
Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)	[111,178]	[109,884]	[135,116]	[+25,232]	[+23.0%]
Non-WUI	[74,449]	[74,012]	[74,166]	[+154]	[0.2%]
Burned Area Rehabilitation	19,870	24,198	24,276	+78	0.3%
Rural Fire Assistance	9,935	9,877	5,000	-4,877	-49.4%
Total	650,152	685,177	743,099	+57,922	+8.5%
<i>FTE</i>	<i>4,820</i>	<i>4,745</i>	<i>4,748</i>	<i>+3</i>	<i>0.1%</i>
Emergency Contingency Appropriations (a)	[225,000]	[98,416]			

(a) \$189,000 was appropriated in P.L.108-07 for repayment of 2002 Section 102 emergency transfers. An additional \$36,000 was appropriated in P.L.108-83 for 2003 emergency suppression costs. In 2004, \$98,416 was appropriated in P.L. 108-108 for repayment of 2003 emergency appropriation transfers into the account.

Summary Table by DOI Mission Component
(dollars in thousands)

	2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	2005 Budget Request	Change from 2004
Resource Projection	94,319	98,210	98,442	+232
Resource Use	0	0	0	0
Recreation	0	0	0	0
Serving Communities	555,833	586,967	644,657	+57,690
Management	0	0	0	0
Total	650,152	685,177	743,099	+57,922

THE PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT AGENDA

Budget and Performance Integration - The 2005 request advances the linkage between the budget for Wildland Fire Management and its program performance in several key ways. First, the request for funding in support of the President's Healthy Forests Initiative in this budget is tied to improved performance in a key performance measure in the Department's Strategic Plan. Hazardous fuels reduction increases will result in more acres treated in wildland urban interface.

Another major example of integration is the agreement between Interior and the USDA Forest Service to propose a new budget structure (discussed below) that will closely align the work of the agencies with the funding for those activities.

Activity-Based Costing (ABC) – The Wildland Fire Management program participated in a pilot test of ABC in early 2003. The results of the pilot guided the Department in the selection of workload activities that have been implemented in 2004. ABC will provide additional information that will be used to inform future management decisions. Specifically, ABC will establish activity codes for each of the six major hazardous fuels reduction treatment categories. These are the same categories by which future treatments are classified, proposed, approved, and budgeted. Actual cost and performance data will be available with which to evaluate program performance in the future. Accurate costs for these activities were unobtainable prior to 2004.

Activity-Based Costing in Wildland Fire Management	
<u>Budget Activity</u>	<u>ABC Work Activity</u>
Fire Preparedness	Prepare Fire Management Plans Provide Community Assistance Construct and Maintain Facilities (DOI-wide work activity) Prepare for Wildland Fires
State and Local Assistance	Provide Community Assistance
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Wildland-urban interface – prescribed fire treatments Wildland-urban interface – mechanical treatments Wildland-urban interface – other (e.g. chemical) treatments Non-wildland-urban interface – prescribed fire treatments Non-wildland-urban interface – mechanical treatments Non-wildland-urban interface – other (e.g. chemical) treatments
Emergency Operations	Monitor and Evaluate Treatments Suppress Wildland Fires Stabilize Burned Areas
Burned Area Rehabilitation	Rehabilitate Lands Damaged by Wildfire Monitor and Evaluate Treatments

By comparing performance plan and accomplishment data in the National Fire Plan Operating and Reporting System (NFPORS) with ABC data, the Department will be able to evaluate the actual costs for different types of treatments and help the program determine the relative cost effectiveness of the different types of hazardous fuels reduction treatments. This data will enable fuels managers to make better treatment decisions as the body of matched accomplishment and cost data grows.

Another benefit of ABC will be the costing for monitoring and evaluation of fuels reduction and burned area rehabilitation treatments. The budget structure groups these costs by program activity only. In the future, data will be recorded on the amount of effort devoted to post-treatment effectiveness activities. The 2005 budget request includes \$8.0 million for monitoring the effectiveness and consequences of hazardous fuels reduction treatments.

Strategic Management of Human Capital - The Department continues to face management challenges resulting from vacancies in key positions, both on and off the fire line, and the small pool of qualified candidates available to fill the vacancies. Much of the current management contingent is at or nearing retirement age. There are not enough qualified candidates in the pipeline today to assume crucial management and leadership roles. The future effectiveness of the program and safety of the general firefighting workforce depend upon the training and preparation of qualified candidates for these jobs. The vacancy problem is particularly evident in the fire management officer, assistant fire management officer, engine supervisor, crew boss, incident commander and team member, engine operator, and other leadership positions. The Wildland Fire Management program has established an inter-bureau working group to establish employee development pipelines to ensure that a constant pool of competent, trained, and experienced people are available for advancement in the future.

In 2004, the Department will initiate implementation of the Wildland Fire Management Workforce Plan. An Action Plan will be developed to set priorities for actions based on funding and the transition of present positions into approved Interagency Fire Management Program Qualifications Standards and Guide. The 2004 program will continue current efforts to provide enhanced training and career advancement opportunities through the training academies and targeted programs such as the Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program and the Technical Fire Management Program.

The 2005 budget request includes funding for implementing a curriculum for professional fuels management specialists. Today, effective fuels management specialists need to possess skills and knowledge beyond the ability to manage the removal of fuels by prescribed fire, mechanical, or other means. Fuels management specialists also need to understand and be able to apply NEPA and ESA regulations; communicate and negotiate effectively with many diverse interests; and, develop treatment plans that achieve resource goals in collaboration with the affected communities and other partners. Advanced training courses that support the President's Healthy Forests Initiative will be conducted at the Prescribed Fire Training Center in Tallahassee, Florida and the Fire Use Training Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Competitive Sourcing – The program's goal is for fifty percent of the funding for on-the-ground hazardous fuels reduction treatments and burned area rehabilitation projects in 2005 to be directed to private sector contractors. Particular emphasis is given to small, local sources as a means of supporting local communities near lands managed by the Department. Recommendations from a study by the National Academy of Public Administration of the contracting and acquisition practices employed by the program to identify opportunities for enhanced utilization of private sector resources in WFM, especially in the area of hazardous fuels reduction, are currently under consideration by DOI.

Financial Performance – In 2005 the WFM program will build upon the enormous recent strides to improve the financial management of the program. First, the Forest Service and Interior have agreed upon a common budget structure that will provide instantly comparable, transparent budgeting and accounting for National Fire Plan appropriations. This budget is the first to be presented under the proposed structure.

The new structure is an improvement over the current one because it more closely ties to the work activities and performance goals of the fire management program. The changes from the current budget structure are few, but significant. The combination of suppression operations and post-fire emergency stabilization, proposed in the 2004 budget request, will be continued. Burned area rehabilitation will be elevated to budget activity status, befitting its importance to the restoration goals of the resource management responsibilities of this Department and the recent Wildland Fire Leadership Council decision to standardize the USDA and DOI definitions and budget practices for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation.

Another new budget activity, State and Local Assistance, will encompass the existing Rural Fire Assistance program, several Forest Service grants programs, and any other grants programs that may be authorized in the future.

Funding for Joint Fire Science Program research will remain in the Preparedness budget activity but will be moved to a new subactivity called Fire Research and Technology. This change is designed to accommodate our National Fire Plan partner agency, the Forest Service. The Forest Service wants to combine its several fire research and technology programs into a single budget line item – a move supported by Interior.

Current and Proposed Budget Structures

Current	Proposed
Activity/ Subactivity	Activity/ Subactivity
Preparedness	Preparedness
	Readiness
	Facility Construction and Maintenance
	Fire Research and Technology
Suppression Operations	Suppression Operations
Other Operations	Suppression Operations
Burned Area Rehabilitation	Emergency Stabilization
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Hazardous Fuels Reduction
Rural Fire Assistance	WUI Fuels Reduction
	Non-WUI Fuels Reduction
	Burned Area Rehabilitation
	State and Local Fire Assistance
	Rural Fire Assistance

The second major financial performance improvement, as discussed previously, is that activity based cost management is being implemented in 2004 to enable the Department and program managers to determine the full cost of conducting the various fire management activities. In 2005, lessons learned in 2004 will be applied.

Another major step being taken by the Forest Service and DOI is the development of a common cost coding system for all large fire suppression incidents. The inability of the program to rapidly accumulate actual cost data for specific large fires has long been a concern to the Secretary, OMB, and Congress. Beginning in 2004, the NFP agencies will all use a common cost code for each fire to which they respond and incur costs. The actual costs for any fire suppression and emergency stabilization event will become readily accessible for the first time. The fire code system replaces five different incident coding schemes formerly used by the fire management agencies.

Finally, the program expects that lessons learned from Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Reviews, begun in 2003, will help reduce the costs of responding to wildfires. Five large fire reviews were conducted in the 2003 fire season. The review teams examined all the incident response costs including fire planning, labor, supplies, aviation support, contract crews and engines, and vendor support. The fire management agencies are currently analyzing the results of the reviews to identify program-wide opportunities for cost containment while maintaining firefighter and public safety.

Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) – The WFM program was the subject of one of the first seven PART reviews conducted in Interior in 2002. The principal PART findings for Wildland Fire Management were:

- The purpose and design of the program is clear and well focused.
- The cost of responding to fires is rapidly rising and no systematic cost containment strategy is in place to track and control firefighting efficiency.
- The program cannot demonstrate that fuels reduction activities are adequately targeted and efficiently managed.
- The long-term goals developed as part of the 10-Year Fire Strategy still require baseline data, annual and long-term targets, and clear prioritization among the four goals and 18 measures.

Based on these findings, the Administration has implemented management improvements in the fire program, including:

1. Improving accountability for firefighting costs and ensuring that states are paying their fair share of such costs. Cost containment reviews are now being conducted at major fires. These interagency reviews identify areas where costs can be constrained without compromising firefighting safety or effectiveness. Appropriate cost sharing among the participating Federal and State agencies will also be studied in 2004.

As a result of the first reviews in 2003, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council called for a blue ribbon panel to investigate and report on the major factors causing high fire suppression costs. Their report to the Council is due in May 2004.

The establishment of burned area rehabilitation as a unique budget activity will also improve fire cost control. In the past, rehabilitation costs have been budgeted with emergency stabilization and have been funded partially by Section 102 transfers. The Wildland Fire Leadership Council approval of the joint Forest Service-Interior agreement to define and budget for rehabilitation identically will have a beneficial impact on cost control. Beginning in 2004, rehabilitation projects and treatments will be subject to the same kind of project nomination, prioritization, and selection processes as hazardous fuels reduction treatments. There will be an enforceable spending cap.

Another joint FS-DOI agreement has resulted in the establishment of a common cost code for every fire incident that will be used by every responding Federal agency. For the first time, accurate fire response cost data will be available for individual fire events. This will be especially helpful in responding to queries about the costs for specific large fires.

2. Developing a new fire preparedness model that focuses on efficient allocation of available resources. In 2003, the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior awarded a contract for design of a fire preparedness planning tool that will be ready for pilot testing by the end of 2004. The Fire Program Analysis (FPA) system will identify an optimal mix of resources (firefighters, engines, aircraft, etc.) for any given level of funding.
3. Establishing project criteria to ensure that hazardous fuels reduction funds are targeted as effectively as possible to reduce risks to communities in the wildland-urban interface. The National Fire Plan Operating and Reporting System (NFPORS) was deployed in 2003 as the Federal fire management system for proposing projects for fuels reduction. Project leaders provide data on the location, type (WUI or non-WUI), acreage, and treatment method (mechanical, prescribed fire, other) that are used by program managers to decide which projects are to receive priority for available funding. The 2005 budget proposes an increase of \$12.8 million for treatments in the WUI.
4. Establishing baseline data for most of the fire management performance measures in the Department's Strategic Plan. These measures are included in tables throughout this budget request. Some of the measures, however, have not been established. Complex measures that are broader than traditional fire management record-keeping, such as estimates of economic damage caused by wildfire, require study and analysis by outside experts.

Five-Year Deferred Maintenance and Construction Plan – The Wildland Fire Management program has developed a 5-Year Deferred Maintenance and Construction Plan. Each plan provides the projects of greatest need in priority order with focus first on critical health and safety and critical resource protection. The Department has undertaken an intense effort originating in the field to develop these lists.

For 2005 construction projects, complete project descriptions in alphabetical order are provided in the Justifications, with a summary list showing priority order. The 2005 deferred maintenance project descriptions and lists showing all projects between 2005-2009 are provided in a

companion volume. Limited modifications to the lists will occur as they are annually reviewed and updated, with the addition of a new fifth year, and submitted to the Congress.

Capital Asset Planning and Control – The WFM program complies with the Capital Planning and Investment Control (CPIC) process for the life cycle of information technology projects. Interagency IT project business cases provide ongoing identification, selection, control, and evaluation of investments in information resources, linking each project to mission needs and identifying compliance with the interagency wildland fire enterprise architecture (under development).

The Departments of the Interior and Agriculture have agreed to collaborate on a single architecture for Wildland Fire Management IT systems and applications. The managing partner of each major interagency IT project is responsible to document the business case which is reviewed and approved by their hosting agency's investment control board process and then reviewed at the Department level. IT investments will be managed cohesively, collaboratively, and consistently across the Interior bureaus, and in coordination with the Forest Service.

The two major systems proposed for additional funding in this budget request, Fire Program Analysis and LANDFIRE, have been approved through the Department's investment management review processes. Their business cases clearly identify and align with mission needs and will not duplicate services offered in another system. For example, implementation of the fire preparedness planning module of the Fire Program Analysis system will replace multiple outdated systems currently used by the four Interior bureaus and the Forest Service. Enhanced preparedness and analysis tools will improve the ability of both Federal fire management agencies and neighboring local communities to prepare for wildfires.

LANDFIRE, a satellite imagery system for finer-scale (30 meters) fuels mapping, will be the first of its type. This fuels imaging system will support fire planners and resource managers throughout the country to assess fuels conditions, fire risk, and vegetation attributes. This information will provide the capability to target those lands at highest risk from damaging wildfires and result in more effective use of fuels treatment dollars. LANDFIRE is expected to provide multiple benefits in the future for land managers, above and beyond fire management applications.

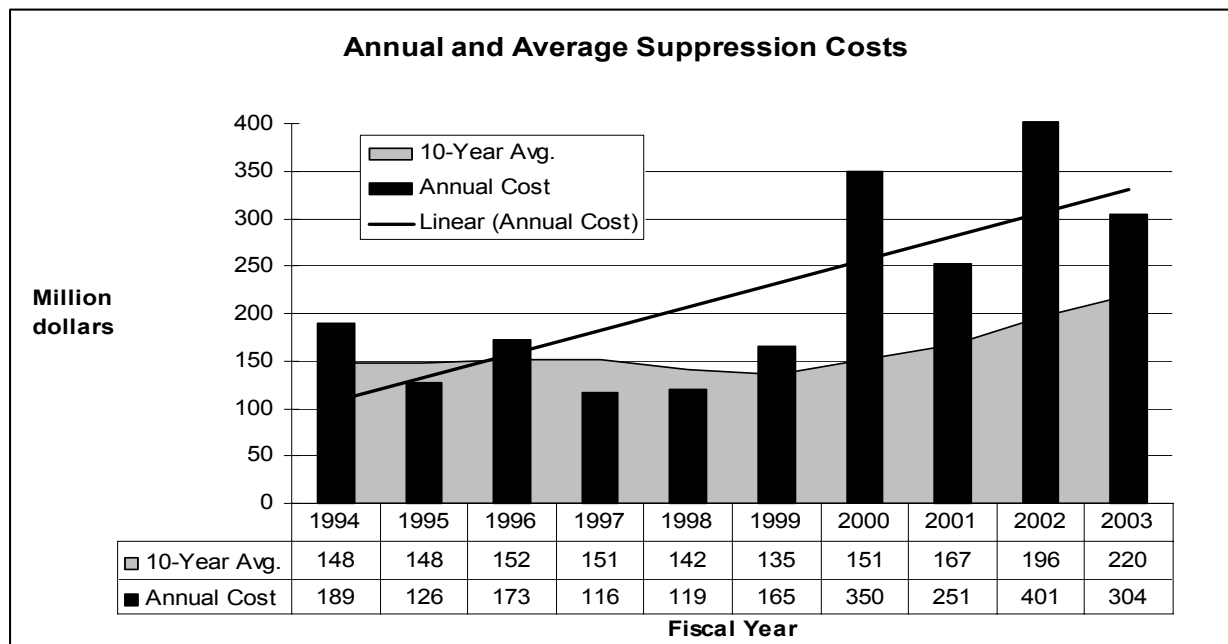
PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The Wildland Fire Management program supports both the Serving Communities and Resource Protection goals of the Department, although its predominant contribution is to Serving Communities.

Serving Communities

More than 85% of the Wildland Fire Management appropriation supports the goal of Serving Communities. Fire preparedness, suppression, and hazardous fuels reduction in the WUI all support this goal. The Department's 97% rate in containing fires upon initial attack on DOI-managed lands in 2003 is evidence of the effectiveness of successful preparedness.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction – The Department has been making steady progress in reducing hazardous fuels in the WUI. The number of acres treated has nearly tripled from 164,337 in 2001, to 480,110 in 2003. Along with the increase in acres treated has come an increase in local collaboration to identify and prioritize areas in need of hazardous fuel reduction. This priority-setting process ensures that fiscal investments are focused on areas that will yield the greatest risk mitigation and environmental benefits. Increases in training, administrative efficiencies, and the resulting growth of expertise will improve the potential for a substantial increase in the number of acres in the future. Fuels reduction treatments will be accomplished in a more professional and safe manner. Emphasis will be on early and frequent collaboration with all members of the public and the application of the best science in choosing and designing fuels hazard reduction projects. The long-term results of treating these acres will be a reduction in the severity of wildfires, with a corresponding decrease in the number of homes lost and an increase in firefighter and public safety. This increase in acres treated will also result in the protection of critical natural resource values, such as threatened or endangered species habitat, critical watersheds, and valuable riparian areas.



Fire Suppression Cost Containment – The rapid rise in suppression costs is driving an effort to improve the cost efficiency of fighting fires, particularly those that require extended attack. The annual costs of DOI's firefighting efforts have ranged from \$251 million to \$401 million every year since 2000. In that time, the 10-year average cost has risen by \$85 million. The need for better fire science and management tools for fire and land managers will be addressed by investments in two promising IT systems (+\$6.4 million). Knowledge gained from these systems will guide future decisions about fuels management, fire readiness, resource levels, and fire response tactics.

Resource Protection

The Wildland Fire Management program supports the Resource Protection goal in two fundamental ways. First, the program seeks to prevent catastrophic wildfires in forests, rangelands, parks, and other lands managed by Interior through fuels reduction treatments. Fuels treatments outside the WUI are planned to strategically select areas where overgrown, diseased, or dead vegetation presents a high risk of unwanted and uncontrollable wildfires. By removing excess fuels through prescribed fire, mechanical removal, or treatment with herbicides, lands are returned to a condition that can withstand and benefit from periodic fires. Periodic cleansing fires serve to return desirable vegetation, protect watersheds, and produce better wildlife habitats. Returning normal fire regimes to an area enhances biological diversity and maintains social and economic values, while reducing the threats posed by devastating fires, subsequent floods, sedimentation, water degradation, and invasive species.

Hazardous fuels reduction treatments in forests, rangelands, and other public lands that are outside the WUI are conducted to create or restore fire-adapted conditions. Fuels reduction outside the WUI also indirectly serves communities because many fires that threaten people and their property start in remote areas and then advance toward communities. Fuels reduction treatments conducted for resource benefits also reduce the likelihood that subsequent wildfires will expand to threaten communities. These treatments secondarily support the goal of Serving Communities by eliminating conditions that are conducive to the spread of wildfires into communities.

Since the National Fire Plan began, the number of acres treated annually by Interior for hazardous fuels outside the WUI has risen 38%, from 563,775 in 2001 to 778,727 in 2003. These figures include acres that were treated whether or not the treatments resulted in an improved condition class. Some of the acres were treated to maintain current condition classes and other acres required several treatments (e.g. mechanical brush removal prior to a prescribed burn). Beginning in 2004, the relevant performance measure will include only those acres that have been converted to a higher condition class. The program anticipates that over 700,000 acres of non-WUI fuels treatments will be accomplished in both 2004 and 2005.

The second WFM program that supports the Resource Protection goal is Burned Area Rehabilitation. Land that has been burned by high intensity wildfire is often burned to the ground, denuded of all vegetation, and the soil organic layer destroyed. Many places cannot recover naturally from such devastation. After emergency stabilization actions have been put in place, WFM agencies select critical portions of such burned areas to begin the restoration process. Native and other desirable species are planted so that conditions favorable to the resource management goals for the land can be restored. Among these goals are fire adaptation, water quality, wildlife habitat, economic value, and control of invasive species. By the definitions recommended by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture and adopted by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, rehabilitation activities are conducted for the period beginning in the year following the fire and ending three years after fire containment. Further restoration of the lands and resources after three years are the responsibility of the land management agencies' operating accounts.

The performance goal related to rehabilitation activities is the percentage of burned acres that are treated for rehabilitation. The need is great because only a small percentage of burned acres receive treatments. Performance in burned area rehabilitation will improve in the future because of management improvements beginning in 2004. Burned area rehabilitation will be budgeted and managed separately from the emergency stabilization account, reflecting a joint Forest Service-Interior decision, ratified by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council. Emergency stabilization treatments undertaken within one year of a fire will be funded out of the emergency operations account. Burned area rehabilitation funding will be focused on treatments necessary from one to three years after a fire while long-term (over three years) restoration will be a responsibility of bureau resource management and operations accounts. A core group of four national level policy and management professionals from each of the fire management bureaus will provide guidance and oversight for ongoing year-round rehabilitation work on a Department-wide basis. Until now, ESR has been managed as a part-time collateral duty for operations, fuels, and resource staffs. As a result of its secondary status it has not received the management priority necessary to ensure program effectiveness and cost efficiency.

Data Validation and Verification

Congress provides significant funding to the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, under the *Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act*, to increase the Nation's readiness in managing wildland fires and to reduce the occurrence of fire destruction. In the *2001 Appropriations Act*, Congress mandated the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to be accountable and demonstrate their progress in achieving the fire management goals and objectives. Accountability for monies spent and results achieved is expected and is closely monitored within and outside the Departments.

Under the National Fire Plan, the WFM program has been continuously improving the collection, compilation, validation, verification, and reporting of wildland fire performance data to ensure that programmatic decisions are based on reliable information. For example, the National Fire Plan Reporting and Operating System (NFPORS) is a collaborative interagency IT investment developed to track accountability for successful implementation of the mandated National Fire Plan. NFPORS has developed into the interagency performance data repository for fuels reduction, burned area rehabilitation, and rural fire assistance. NFPORS has a statistical data and trend analysis tool component that performs data analysis to help improve data integrity and reliability by identifying data that is outside the usual expected range. This tool will report on developing trends and patterns and help identify the success of treatments. The NFPORS "Dashboard" was specifically designed as an executive reporting component for decision making. NFPORS data is used in the National Fire Plan annual report and on quarterly performance measure updates.

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

DOI Strategic Goal: Serve Communities							
End Outcome Goal: Protect lives, resources, and property							
Outcome Measures:	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Planned: Budget Just- ifications	2004 Planned: Revised Final	2005 Planned	Change in Perfor- mance (2004 : 2005)	2008 Long Term Target
Loss of life from severe, unplanned and unwanted wildland fire is eliminated (SP: SEM.1.001) <u>A/</u>	23	31	TBD	0	0	0	0
Intermediate Outcome Goal 1: Improved fire management.							
Intermediate Outcome Measures:							
Percent of unplanned and unwanted wildland fires controlled during initial attack (SP: SIM.1.01.001)	97%	97%	95%	95%	95%	0	95%
Number of acres burned by unplanned and unwanted wildland fires (in thousands) (SP: SIM.1.01.002) <u>B/</u>	7,183	3,959	TBD	4,798	4,798	0	4,798
Notes: <u>A/</u> The goal for loss of life is always 0 because firefighter and public safety is the highest priority core value of the Wildland Fire Management program. <u>B/</u> The projected estimate for number of acres burned is the actual 10-year average from 1994-2003. This includes all wildfires reported on Interior, Forest Service, State, and private lands.							
DOI Strategic Goal: Resource Protection							
End Outcome Goal: Improve the health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources that are DOI managed or influenced in a manner consistent with obligations regarding the allotment and use of water.							
Intermediate Outcome Goal 1: Restore and maintain proper function to watersheds and landscapes.							
Restore Fire Adapted Ecosystems							
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class per million dollars gross investment	UNK	<u>279,188</u> \$86.64M = 3,222	<u>474,500</u> \$74.94M = 6,332*	<u>280,000</u> \$74.01M = 3,783*	<u>285,000</u> \$74.17M = 3,843	+60	<u>300,000</u> \$75M = 4,000

* The 2004 performance was estimated before a database existed for condition class improvements. NFORS 2003 data provides a realistic basis for projecting future accomplishments. Multiple treatments (e.g. mechanical or chemical treatment followed by prescribed fire) are often required for improvement in overall condition class.

Strategic Plan Goal Funding Tables

(dollars in thousands)

	2004 Plan	2005 Request	Change From 2004
Resource Protection:			
Improve health of watersheds and landscapes	98,210	98,442	+232
Serve Communities:			
Improve fire management	586,967	644,657	+57,690
Total	685,177	743,099	57,922

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS

(\$000)

Bureau		2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) / Dec(-) from 2004
Preparedness	\$	275,411	274,303	+2,227	+6,488	283,018	+8,715
	FTE	3,224	3,149		-25	3,124	-25
Suppression Operations	\$	159,309	192,903	0	+28,620	221,523	+28,620
	FTE	0	0			0	0
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	\$	185,627	183,896	+386	+25,000	209,282	+25,386
	FTE	1,426	1,426		+28	1,454	+28
Burned Area Rehabilitation	\$	19,870	24,198	+78	0	24,276	+78
	FTE	171	171			171	0
Rural Fire Assistance	\$	9,935	9,877	0	-4,877	5,000	-4,877
	FTE	0	0		0		0
Total, Wildland Fire Management	\$	650,152	685,177	+2,691	+55,231	743,099	+57,922
	FTE	4,820	4,745		+3	4,748	+3

JUSTIFICATION OF UNCONTROLLABLE AND RELATED CHANGES (\$000)

	2004 Budget Change	2004 Revised Change	2005 Change
Additional Operational Costs from 2004 to 2005			
January Pay Raises:			
2004 Pay Raise	\$1,921	\$1,921	\$1,451
Amount of pay raise absorbed	[\$2,255]	[\$9,409]	[\$2,422]
2005 Pay Raise			\$2,125
Amount of pay raise absorbed			[\$2,124]
These adjustments are for an additional amount needed in 2005 to fund the remaining 3-month portion of the estimated cost of the, on average, 4.1 percent pay increases effective in January 2004 and the additional costs of funding for an estimated 1.5 percent January 2004 pay increase for GS-series employees and the associated pay rate changes made in other pay series.			
Other Uncontrollable Cost Changes:			
One Less Paid Workday			-\$1,468
This adjustment reflects the decreased costs resulting from the fact that there is one less payday in 2005 than in 2004.			
Employer Share of Federal Health Benefit Plans			\$583
Amount of health benefit increase absorbed			[\$582]
The adjustment is for changes in the Federal government's share of the cost of health insurance coverage for Federal employees.			
Total Request			\$2,691
Total Absorbed		[\$9,409]	[\$5,128]

ACTIVITY: WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

(\$000)

		2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) Dec(-) From 2004
Preparedness	\$	275,411	274,303	+2,227	+6,488	283,018	+8,715
	FTE	4,447	4,402		-25	4,377	-25
Readiness	\$	255,170	254,180	+2,227	+6,237	262,644	+8,464
	FTE	4,444	4,399		-25	4,374	-25
Facilities Construction And Maintenance	\$	12,294	12,222		+152	12,374	+152
	FTE	0	0			0	
Research And Technology	\$	7,948	7,901		+99	8,000	+99
	FTE	3	3			3	
BLM	\$	161,932	159,196	+1,249	+536	160,981	+1,785
	FTE	3,224	3,149		-25	3,124	-25
BIA	\$	53,264	53,649	+561	+2,043	56,253	+2,604
	FTE	478	478			478	
FWS	\$	27,181	27,140	+170	+1,958	29,268	+2,128
	FTE	289	289			289	
NPS	\$	30,729	32,522	+244	+1,951	34,717	+2,195
	FTE	480	480			480	
OS	\$	2,305	1,796	+3		1,799	+3
	FTE	6	6			6	

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

This activity funds the nonemergency and predictable aspects of the Department's wildland fire program. The Wildland Fire Preparedness activity consists of three subactivities: Readiness, Facilities Construction and Maintenance, and Research and Technology. Preparedness includes readiness, operational planning, oversight, procurement, contracting, training, supervision, and deployment of wildland fire suppression personnel and equipment prior to wildland fire occurrence. It also includes activities related to program monitoring and evaluation, integration of fire into land-use planning, fire facility construction and maintenance, fire research and fire science program activities, and interagency coordination and direction.

ACTIVITY: WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS**SUBACTIVITY: READINESS**

(\$000)

Bureau		2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) Dec(-) from 2004
Readiness	\$	255,169	254,180	+2,227	+6,237	262,644	+8,464
	FTE	4,474	4,399		-25	4,374	-25
BLM	\$	143,530	142,848	+1,249	+5,478	149,575	+6,727
	FTE	3,221	3,146		-25	3,121	-25
BIA	\$	52,147	51,956	+561	+352	52,869	+913
	FTE	478	478		0	478	0
FWS	\$	26,458	26,307	+170	+37	26,514	+207
	FTE	289	289		0	289	0
NPS	\$	30,729	31,274	+244	+370	31,888	+614
	FTE	480	480		0	480	0
OS	\$	2,305	1,795	+3	0	1,798	+3
	FTE	6	6		0	6	0

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The goal of readiness and program management is to achieve the most cost-efficient and technically effective fire management program level that meets resource objectives while minimizing costs of suppression and resource damages.

Part of the Department of the Interior's mission and strategic vision is to protect property and resources from the destructive effects of wildland fires while providing for firefighter and public safety. To accomplish this mission, the Department of the Interior bureaus fund preparedness activities on over 500 million acres of public lands consisting of 261 million acres of BLM lands (2.6 million acres of which are Oregon and California Grant Lands, Coos Bay Wagon Road Lands and intermingled public lands in western Oregon), 84 million acres of National Park Service land, 96 million acres of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands, and 56 million acres of Bureau of Indian Affairs Trust lands. As part of this coverage, whenever efficiencies can be gained and/or costs reduced, the Department of the Interior bureaus enter into cooperative agreements with other Federal agencies as well as State, tribal, and local governments. Under these arrangements, protection responsibilities are exchanged and scarce resources shared.

All WFM activities within the Department are guided by Fire Management Plans that cover planned contributions for interagency-shared resources, training, prevention, wildland fire preparedness staffing, detection, and equipment, as well as the appropriate response to wildland fire to meet land use plan objectives. In determining readiness, each bureau focuses primarily on the internal needs of each land management unit for fire program management, initial attack suppression readiness, and prescribed fire capability.

Readiness resources are deployed in advance of fire emergencies based on an analysis of historic needs to ensure Department of the Interior bureaus' "readiness to respond" when fires occur. Department of the Interior agencies carry out WFM responsibilities in national parks, in wildlife refuges and preserves, on Indian reservations, and on BLM public lands, including historic and cultural sites, commercial forests, rangelands, as well as on some lands managed by other Federal and State agencies. Fire prevention and suppression are provided by Federal fire crews and through cooperative protection exchanges and contracts with other Federal and State agencies, and self-governing Tribes.

The Department maintains a target success rate of 95% for containing fires on initial attack because the marginal costs to prepare to stop nearly 100% of fires on initial attack would be prohibitive and could be better spent on other activities such as hazardous fuel reduction.

Program management resources include permanent and career seasonal professional and technical personnel who provide leadership, coordination, program planning, and technical and administrative support for fire and aviation management.

National capabilities include unit-level requirements, plus national resources such as hotshot crews that are available for large fires on all Federal lands regardless of ownership. Economically efficient fire management requires that the Department of the Interior bureaus pool their resources to manage large project fires and, to a certain extent, prescribed fires. Therefore, resources that are used primarily for large, interagency efforts are collectively identified within the readiness process. Such resources include air tankers and retardant bases, lead planes, hotshot crews, smokejumpers, large transport planes, and fire weather technical support.

The BLM hosts the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Weather Service, and the other Department of the Interior bureaus. NIFC provides logistic support by mobilizing and coordinating the movement of wildland fire resources when the existing capability in geographic areas is exceeded, or when States and other countries request assistance. In addition to its logistical coordination role, NIFC is also the home for one of the eleven national fire caches for supplies and equipment. It provides the national radio cache for fire and disaster assistance and serves as the lead technical support group for communications, remote sensing, and wildland fire engine design. It also serves as the national development center for standardized suppression, prescribed burning, prevention, and management courses, and is the home for the Great Basin Smokejumpers.

The Alaska Fire Service, located in Fairbanks, is responsible for providing wildland fire suppression services for all Department of the Interior agencies and associated Alaska Native Corporation lands in Alaska. The protected area encompasses 241 million acres.

Aviation support contracts – The Preparedness program funds the up-front guaranteed annual availability costs of aircraft contracts that ensure that aviation airplanes and helicopters will be available and ready for use during the fire season. The benefiting program (typically suppression) pays the actual flight use rates. Aviation resources include large air tankers, jump ships, helicopters, single engine air tankers (SEATs), and air attack platforms. These resources are contracted by the Department, which assumes the responsibility for ensuring that each contract is filled with a performance capable, safe aircraft at the lowest possible cost. Aircraft are positioned around the country based upon careful analysis of anticipated or actual fire occurrence needs.

Fire Program Analysis – FPA will support the protection and management of the Nation's forest, rangeland and aquatic ecosystems. This system will integrate ecological, economic and social factors to analyze and determine an appropriate mix of fire preparedness and suppression resources to meet current and future needs. This project will support States and private landowners by analyzing and providing appropriate levels of wildfire protection for the wildland-urban interface. The project will use the best available scientific information to support the analysis.

THE FUTURE OF FIRE PROGRAM ANALYSIS

- The Fire Program Analysis (FPA) system is being developed jointly by the BLM, NPS, BIA, FWS, and USDA Forest Service to better utilize fire science and statistical analysis in implementing cost-effective fire management programs.
- The first module, for fire preparedness planning and budgeting, will determine optimal staff and equipment resource levels for multi-agency fire management areas to prepare for wildfires based on local fire occurrence, fuels, burning conditions, and values to be protected. The module will be able to determine the optimal resource mixes for any given budget level.
- In 2005, development will be expanded to address extended attack, large fire support, prescribed fire and fuels management, and emergency stabilization and rehabilitation.
- When fully developed in 2008, FPA will provide the Federal wildland fire management agencies and fire managers with the best tool for identifying cost-effective long-term budget and planning strategies that will integrate suppression, fuels reduction, and wildland fire use.

2003 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2003, the Department accomplished the following improvements for fire readiness:

- Completed the construction phase of the Incident Qualifications Certification System (IQCS). The IQCS will track personnel incident overhead qualifications, identify incident organizational gaps, and help design training programs to correct deficiencies. The IQCS will be particularly valuable in identifying training and skills needs in light of the impending retirement of many senior personnel over the next three to five years. Providing more fully trained and qualified

incident management and support personnel will maintain firefighter safety and result in more efficient, effective and safe suppression operations.

- A blue ribbon committee was formed to address the issue of aviation safety after the tragic crashes and loss of life in 2002. Their report includes findings for improving aircraft safety. A major finding was that the agencies have been contracting for aerial suppression aircraft that were not originally designed for the rigors of the firefighting mission. Fire support aircraft need to be able to fly low in hot conditions, drop heavy loads suddenly, and accelerate quickly to safety. The Department responded by substituting aircraft that were specifically designed for this mission, for example, replacing certain large air tankers with helicopters and single engine air tankers.
- The Department held the cost of contract aviation support to \$17.6 million by taking several management actions necessary to operate efficiently within budget constraints. First, the large air transport contract was canceled, reducing Preparedness costs by \$700,000. Second, DOI did not contract for one heavy air tanker or the anticipated two replacement single engine air tankers due to the high contract costs bid by the industry, reducing anticipated Preparedness costs by another \$360,000.
- The concept of shared recruitment among the bureaus was pilot tested in Wyoming in 2003. Using FIRES, a customized version of the automated QuickHire system, fire recruitment and retention efforts for all four Department of the Interior firefighting bureaus were consolidated and the number and diversity of qualified firefighter candidates available to selecting officials of each bureau were expanded. Qualified candidates benefited by having their applications available for consideration by four bureaus at one time. The pilot used standardized firefighter position descriptions, recruitment practices, and rules for the sharing of job applications. The results of the pilot were encouraging: 1,055 applications were received for 56 open firefighter positions in Wyoming last year.

2004 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

The NFP will continue to provide overall direction to preparedness program activities in 2004. The 2004 Readiness budget is \$254,180,000 and 4,399 FTE for all Department of the Interior agencies that participate in Wildland Fire Preparedness.

In FY 2004, Fire Management Plans will be updated or completed consistent with the Federal Wildland Fire Policy on all Federal WFM agencies' administrative units with burnable vegetation by 2004. These plans are being coordinated with partners across agency boundaries, on a landscape scale where possible.

Fire Readiness Resources

	2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	2004 Est. vs 2003 Actual
Firefighters	4,129	3,872	-257 *
Management, overhead, and support personnel	1,438	1,414	-24 *
Type 1 or Hotshot crews	25	25	0
Smokejumpers	148	155	+7
Engines	781	754	-27
Dozers	69	68	-1
Water/foam tenders	92	94	+2
Tractor/plows	37	40	+3
Airtankers	37	33	-4
Helicopters	54	53	-1
Other aircraft	30	29	-1
Boats	7	7	0

* Preparedness FTE are reduced by 75 in 2004. The number of firefighter and other personnel listed in this table do not directly correspond to FTE because many firefighters work only part of the fiscal year.

Aviation support contracts - The safety of the people who risk their lives to fight fires and the public is the highest priority of the Wildland Fire Management program. The NFP agencies are applying stronger safety standards for aircraft used in fighting wildland fires following the recommendations of a blue-ribbon panel. Increasing attention is being paid to the qualification of firefighters to perform their duties in a high risk environment. In 2004, the Department expects to award 115 aviation contracts at a cost of \$19.4 million. This is a \$1.7 million (9.9%) increase over the 2003 level.

In 2004, the WFM program will continue to shift away from the large air tankers, due to their increasing age and safety risk. Sandia National Laboratories is conducting an engineering analysis to determine which of the existing airtankers can continue to be operated with confidence and which cannot. In the summer of 2004, the fire management program will test two new air platforms to see if either can be a safer and more effective replacement for the aging large air tankers in the future.

DOI is canceling the contracts for four SEATs in 2004. The specific contracts cancelled were based upon a review of the overall use of the SEATs, in conjunction with the anticipated workload. The positioning of all aerial suppression resources is based upon in depth analysis of the comparative effectiveness of these resources by location and against other suppression resources. This analysis is ongoing, although the next major review will be conducted upon implementation of the Fire Planning Analysis system.

The Department is developing a new strategic plan for aviation management in 2004 in response to the findings of the blue ribbon panel (below), the large fire cost reviews, and internal program discussions.

Fire Program Analysis - Phase I of the Fire Program Analysis system will be completed by the end of FY 2004. A joint DOI, Forest Service, and State Foresters panel concluded, congressional appropriations committee report language has directed, and GAO and OMB have recommended that the fire program should develop and implement a single budget and planning analysis tool for determining the preparedness needs of all five wildland fire agencies. Department of the Interior bureaus and the U.S. Forest Service began development of a fire preparedness planning system in 2003 that will continue in 2004. Phase I of the FPA, an optimization module specifically for fire preparedness resource allocation, will be implemented by the end of 2004. FPA will replace several different agency models currently in use. The model will consider State and local capabilities in the wildland urban interface. This common, cost-effective planning model will provide tools that fire managers can use to allocate funds efficiently. This system is being developed under the auspices of the USDA CPIC process.

Qualifications and Certification - The fire organization recognizes the need for qualification standards for firefighters and others serving in suppression-related positions. These standards have been refined over the years, and are now being encompassed in the Incident Command System, which identifies positions, prerequisite training and experience. The agencies have used various systems over the years to track and ensure compliance with these requirements. The existing systems are all over 15 years old and do not link personnel qualifications records to incident organizational needs. Development of the new Incident Qualifications Certification System began in 2000 and will be completed in 2004. The IQCS replaces various current systems with a single, automated performance-based job certification process.

Also in 2004, FIRES recruitment project will be expanded to the Rocky Mountain Geographic Area Coordination Center, with full national deployment scheduled for 2005.

JUSTIFICATION OF 2005 PROGRAM CHANGES

2005 PROGRAM CHANGES

	2005 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
Readiness	262,644	+6,237
Aviation Support	[22,708]	[+3,337]
Fire Program Analysis	[4,400]	[+2,900]
<i>FTE</i>		<i>[-25]</i>

The FY 2005 budget request for Readiness is \$262,643,000 and 4,374 FTE, a net program increase of \$6,237,000 and decrease of 25 FTE from the 2004 estimated level. The increase will improve the program's effectiveness in preparing for and preventing fires for many years to come.

Aviation support contracts (+3,337,000)

The 2005 budget request for the aviation program is \$22,707,000, an increase of \$3,337,000 (up 17.2%) for fire-related aviation charges. This increase supports the Strategic Plan Goal of Serving Communities by improving public and firefighter safety and by reducing the number of homes and structures lost to wildland fire and the number of escaped fires. Each agency has committed to producing a multi-year aviation strategic plan that complements the plans of the other fire agencies.

This additional funding is required to operate a safe and efficient firefighting program. The number of aerial assets contracted and the length of season they will be available will be maintained at the 2004 level. Maintaining the number of aircraft will continue to reduce the risk to firefighters as aircraft provide aerial coordination and supervision for ground firefighting forces. Air attack is especially important in initial attack on wildfires because retardant application reduces fire spread and allows ground forces to safely establish a perimeter before fires can build in intensity. Air attack is a major factor in the Department's 97.5% success rate for initial attack.

The requested is necessary to maintain aviation assets at the 2004 capability level because of rising contract costs that are being driven by the findings of a blue ribbon panel report on aviation safety issued in 2003. The panel was established to determine a future path for the aviation program that would allow for safer, efficient support to the suppression and prescribed fire programs. Their findings were in eight separate areas, of which six result in additional budget requirements on the preparedness program. The following are excerpts from the "Federal Aerial Firefighting: Assessing Safety and Effectiveness" report findings:

Finding 1. Safety - The safety record of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters used in federal wildland fire management is unacceptable.

Finding 2. New Environment, New Risks - Because the wildland environment has changed significantly, controlling wildland fires cannot be considered an auxiliary mission second to land management. Wildland firefighting has grown to a level of importance that warrants the attention of national leaders.

Finding 3. Aircraft - Under the proposed system of aircraft certification, contracting, and operation, the cost of more modern aircraft with higher certification standards will increase.

Finding 4. Mission - The variety of missions, philosophies, and unclear standards of Federal land management agencies creates a "mission muddle" that seriously compromises the safety and effectiveness of aviation in wildland fire management.

Finding 5. Culture, Organizational Structure and Management - The culture, organizational structure and management of Federal wildland fire management agencies are ill suited to conduct safe and effective aviation operations in the current environment.

Finding 6. Certification - The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification processes do not require testing and inspection to ensure that the aircraft are airworthy to perform intended missions.

Finding 7. Contracts - Government contracts for air tanker and helicopter fire management services do not adequately recognize business and operational realities or aircraft limitations. As a result, contract provisions contain disincentives to flight safety.

Finding 8. Training - Training is under funded and inadequately specified for helicopters, large air tankers, and other fixed-wing operations.

The enhanced safety requirements for the aircraft and their pilots, coupled with a continued rise in the insurance premiums charged to all members of the aviation community as a result of 9/11, have resulted in higher bid rates for aircraft. Additional cost drivers for 2005 include the fact that while the SEATs were originally expected to be “two for one” on the contracted rate compared to the large air tankers, the higher demand and short supply has resulted in a higher bid rate. For example, an M18 (a 500-gallon SEAT with an average cruising speed of 120 mph) which had bid \$840 per day availability in 2002 is now demanding over \$1,100 per day. AT802s (an 800-gallon SEAT, turbine engine, average cruising speed of 170 mph) have bid as high as \$2,600 per day, as compared to \$1,700 per day in 2002.

Other cost drivers include a continued rise in the insurance premiums charged to all members of the aviation community as a result of 9/11, higher labor costs (salary and associated benefits), and normal inflationary pressures. As all of these resources are contracted on a three-year basis, we will now begin to see the full impact of 9/11, as the new contracts are negotiated. In 2005, for the BLM, 40% of all helicopter contracts, 40% of all SEAT contracts, and all heavy air tanker contracts are up for bid. There is no planned increase in the number of aviation assets from 2004.

Fire Program Analysis System (+\$2,900,000)

An increase of \$2,900,000 is requested for the FPA system development contract bringing Interior's share to \$4,400,000 in 2005. This request provides funds for continued planning, development, and technical support to improve the quality of the fire program planning process, and respond to the initiatives requested by Congress and OMB. Phase I (initial attack and wildland fire use) of the interagency Fire Program Analysis System will be implemented in 2005. Development of Phase II will be initiated in 2005 and will take three years. Phase II will build on the economic theory and modeling framework developed in the Phase I Preparedness Module in order to expand FPA to analyze all aspects of wildland fire management in one integrated system. Phase II will focus on the following major areas.

- Extended attack, large fire support, and national resources
- Prescribed fire and fuels management
- Prevention and education
- Emergency stabilization and rehabilitation

FTE Reduction (-25 FTE)

The reduction of 25 FTE is associated with improvements in efficiency.

ACTIVITY: WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS**SUBACTIVITY: FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**

(\$000)

Bureau		2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) Dec(-) from 2004
Facilities Construction and Maintenance	\$	12,374	12,222	0	+152	12,374	+152
	FTE*	0	0	0	0	0	0
BLM	\$	10,528	8,444	0	-5,041	3,403	-5,041
BIA	\$	1,121	1,694	0	+1,691	3,385	+1,691
FWS	\$	725	835	0	+1,921	2,756	+1,921
NPS	\$	0	1,249	0	+1,581	2,830	+1,581

* The WFM program does not charge FTE to this budget subactivity.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2005 budget for Facilities is \$12,374,000, an increase of \$152,000 over the 2004 budget. This subactivity supports the Serving Communities mission goal from the Department's Strategic Plan by providing protection of lives, resources and property from wildland fire. Safe and properly maintained facilities are important for protecting firefighters and the equipment upon which they rely. Like other resource programs in Department of the Interior, the fire management program has a five-year plan to repair or replace facilities that are in deteriorating and unsafe condition.

The facilities needs of the WFM program are compounded by the requirement to accommodate the recent expansion in fire readiness personnel and equipment. The WFM program has added 1,800 new employees, 25 aircraft, 297 engines and other heavy equipment under the National Fire Plan since 2000. Firefighters require and deserve up-to-date, safe quarters and operational facilities. New heavy equipment must be stored and protected from the elements, both to increase their useful life, and ensure that they are in top condition when needed to respond to fire emergencies.

The budget for facilities maintenance and construction is based on the Five-Year Plan for Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvement. The plan identifies and ranks projects that will reduce critical health and safety risks at Department of the Interior facilities and on Departmental lands. The fire management program has undertaken intensive effort originating in the field to develop these lists. This is a critical investment to meet the Department's and the four Department of the Interior bureaus' missions to reduce threats to public health, safety, and property, and to restore and maintain health of the land.

Successful implementation of the NFP requires the correction of critical health and safety-related facility problems as well as the installation of facilities that improve the suppression response capability required to keep fires small, and reduce the threat to structures, municipal watersheds, and wildlife habitat in the urban interface. With adequate fire facilities and infrastructure, the program will be capable of maintaining a state of readiness, provide full support for suppression activities, and enhance fuels treatment capability.

For the 2005 projects, brief project descriptions are provided below. Twenty-seven projects totaling \$12,374,000 are proposed for 2005. The 2005 deferred maintenance and capital improvement project descriptions and lists showing all projects between 2006 and 2009 are provided in a companion volume. Limited modifications to the lists will occur as they are annually reviewed, updated and submitted to the Congress.

FIRE FACILITY DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FY 2005

Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost (\$000)	Rank
Anahuac NWR Fire Quarters Construction: Construct 1400 sq. ft. fire crew living quarters. FWS standard crew quarters design: living area, dining area, full kitchen, and two full bathrooms. Modular construction on concrete foundation.	FWS	TX	350	449	18
Apple Valley Helibase: New construction of a 1,500 sq. ft. office and pilot-ready room and demolition of the current substandard facility. The new facility will provide sufficient space to enable the helibase to comply with aviation policy and operate in a safe and efficient manner.	BLM	CA	955	953	1
Big Bend Dormitory: Construct 10-person dormitory in the park headquarters housing. Dormitory will be one story, wood frame and stucco construction with 2200 square feet of space. Construction will include sidewalks, parking and fire sprinkler system.	NPS	TX	100	451	27
Blackwater NWR Fire Quarters Construction: Construct 1400 sq. ft. fire crew living quarters. FWS standard crew quarters design: handicap accessible, living area, dining area, full kitchen and two full bathrooms. Modular construction on concrete foundation.	FWS	MD	300	516	21
Canaveral Fire Cache: Construction of a fire cache facility. Area of the structure would be approximately 1450 sq ft with sufficient height to park a light engine. The structure will be framed construction with wooden rafters to meet local hurricane standards. The structure would include heat/air conditioning and a concrete apron.	NPS	FL	350	305	20

Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost (\$000)	Rank
Chapin Helibase and Operations Building: Construction of a helibase operations building and helipad that will house an office ready room, helicopter support, fire equipment storage and indoor parking for three operations vehicles. The structure will be a one story 1664 sq. ft. modular metal building. The helipad will be of concrete and asphalt construction to meet specifications for a Type II helicopter.	NPS	CO	425	205	12
Cheyenne River Warehouse: There are currently no facilities to store wildland engines. This is new construction of 3,700 sq. ft to provide for 3 engine bays and equipment storage for crews. The protection of equipment from weather and vandalism is critical in this climate and location.	BIA	SD	350	427	15
Cheyenne-Arapaho Renovation of Existing Station: Materials to renovate an existing 15+ year old facility and add office space for 2 additional personnel.	BIA	OK	250	32	26
Comanche Office & Engine Storage: Replace a 20+ year old facility. The new facility would provide for 2 offices and equipment storage, approximately 5,000 sq ft.	BIA	OK	350	215	16
Emergency repairs and maintenance	all			922	
Flagstaff Area Fire Facility: Construct a Wildland fire facility to house and protect two NPS engines, provide a work area for employees assigned fire duties, and provide a secure fire cache space for the Flagstaff Area National Monuments (Wupatki, Sunset Crater Volcano and Walnut Canyon National Monuments).	NPS	AZ	300	329	25
Isle au Haut Fire Cache Rehabilitation: This is a 768 sq. ft., heated, two bay wood frame garage that would provide vehicle storage for two slip-on pump units, a trailer mounted pump, and storage for fire supplies. It would also provide work space for fire management personnel.	NPS	ME	850	280	4
J. Clark Salyer NWR Interagency Dispatch/Cache: Construct 60X35 foot building to house the North Dakota Interagency Dispatch Center (NDC) and the North Dakota Zone Interagency Fire Cache. Fire cache will measure roughly 40X35 feet and the NDC office 20X35 feet.	FWS	ND	300	351	22
Jordan Fire Station: New construction of a fire station complex including crew quarters, engine barn, and operations building. This facility will allow our initial attack forces to improve response times in the Jordan Missouri River Breaks area	BLM	MT	870	1,896	3
Mescalero Modular Lookout Quarters: This is a request for replacement of 5 facilities of approximately 1,440 sq ft each. The facilities will be modular replacements that will provide for living quarters. The quarters are located in remote areas and used as quarters for personnel used in the detection of wildland fires.	BIA	NM	790	324	6

Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost (\$000)	Rank
Mescalero Replacement of Helitack Facility: This is a new facility to replace an existing structure. This project is needed to provide a room to brief crews and manage helicopter operations. It will provide storage and a working area for crews used in the wildland fire management air operations program.	BIA	NM	475	280	9
Mescalero Warehouse: This is a request for renovation of 15+ year old structure used for office space and to store equipment, supplies and wildland engines. The request is for renovating a facility of approximately 7,560 sq ft, including new insulation, electrical, sewage, water, and structural needs such as a new roof.	BIA	NM	440	627	11
Morris WMD Fire Cache: Construct 2400 sq. ft. fire equipment storage and cache building. Three vehicle bays, pole shed construction.	FWS	MN	300	162	24
Mt. Rainer Fire Facilities: Construction of a wildland fire management facility adjacent to the planned structural fire facility in the Longmire area of Mount Rainier National Park. The proposed facility is a single 2500 sq.ft. block structure on a concrete slab. The design includes 3 offices, a conference room, cache, and vehicle storage.	NPS	WA	350	404	19
Okefenokee NWR Interagency Dispatch and Cache/Office: An Interagency Dispatch and Cache has been planned at this refuge to support FWS, States of Georgia and Florida and the USDA Forest Service fire organizations. The center will provide dispatch and cache functions for all bureaus from southeast GA to Jacksonville, FL and through the central FL panhandle at Tallahassee.	FWS	GA	537	350	8
Salish & Kootenai Equipment Storage Building: New construction of an New 800 sq. ft. facility to store engines and equipment that must be protected from weather and vandalism. This is a warehouse and wildland engine storage area that is heated to ensure the readiness of wildland engines and equipment.	BIA	MT	400	85	13
San Carlos IHC Program Building: This project will replace a facility used to house the San Carlos Interagency Hotshot Crew offices, training facilities and garage for crew vehicles and equipment. The project will consist of a steel building with approximately 7,000 sq. ft of space.	BIA	AZ	825	860	5
Schoolhouse Peak Fire Tower Rehabilitation: Rehabilitate the 841 square foot fire tower. Construct new interior walls, ceilings and seal openings. Replace rat infested insulation in walls and ceilings. Replace cabinets, kitchen appliances and bathroom facilities. Rehabilitate gas, sewer and water distribution lines. Upgrade septic system to current building standards.	NPS	CA	580	46	7

Project	Bureau	State	Score	Cost (\$000)	Rank
Sheldon NWR Vehicle Storage Office Cache: Construct building for equipment storage and personnel work space with 3 environmentally controlled enclosed bays, fire equipment cache, office space for personnel, and restroom facilities with showers and changing areas. Building frame proposed will be Butler type construction with interior partitions for cache, offices, and restroom facilities.	FWS	NV	300	722	23
Surprise Valley Fire Station: Renovation of existing Fire Station including installation of fire alarm, handicapped access, and separation of living and shower facilities to accommodate males and females.	BLM	CA	930	300	2
Ute Mt., White Mesa Engine Garage: This is a request for materials to construct a new facility to store 2 wildland engines. Labor costs for construction will be provided by the tribe.	BIA	NM	350	62	17
Whiskytown Fire Cache Construction: Construction of a 3,430 sq. ft. wildland fire cache consisting of 3 engine bays, 3 offices, 1 planning room, a restroom, and locker room/cache area.	NPS	CA	460	600	10
Winnebago Equipment Storage: This is new construction that represents the addition of 1,600 sq. ft to provide for wildland engine and equipment storage. This facility will be constructed of metal.	BIA	NE	400	221	14
TOTAL				\$12,374	27

Each of the above projects is described in a detailed project data sheet contained in the five-year deferred maintenance and capital improvement plan that will be provided to the Congress as a separate document.

2003 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Department of the Interior used \$25.4 million, including carryover from prior years, to construct or repair 89 facilities in 20 States in 2003. This table provides summary data by State.

State	Number of Projects	Funding (\$000)	State	Number of Projects	Funding (\$000)
Alaska	5	8,910	Nevada	10	2,664
Arizona	6	3,200	New Mexico	5	351
California	8	2,708	North Dakota	1	21
Colorado	3	1,402	Oregon	9	721
Florida	2	223	South Carolina	1	5
Georgia	1	8	Tennessee	1	467
Idaho	13	1,739	Texas	2	339
Kentucky	1	10	Utah	3	192

State	Number of Projects	Funding (\$000)	State	Number of Projects	Funding (\$000)
Missouri	1	343	Washington	1	461
Montana	14	931	Wyoming	2	684
			Totals	89	25,370

2004 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

The 2004 budget of \$12,222,000 is based on the WFM Five-Year Plan for Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvement. Infrastructure is essential to support implementation of the preparedness component of the National Fire Plan.

Projects are ranked using seven different factors based on the percentage of cost associated with each of the relevant ranking categories. Nine of the projects with the highest health, safety, and resource ratings are included in the 2004 budget. This is a critical investment if the Department is to meet the Department's mission to reduce threats to public health, safety, and property; and restore and maintain the health of the land. Funding for the second phase of the firefighter housing facility, located on Ft. Wainwright in Fairbanks, Alaska, is included in the 2004 budget.

JUSTIFICATION OF 2005 PROGRAM CHANGES

2005 PROGRAM CHANGES

	2005 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
\$(000)	12,374	+152

The FY 2005 budget request for Facilities Construction and Maintenance is \$12,374,000, a net program increase of \$152,000 over the 2004 estimated level. This increase will provide full funding for the projects identified as the highest priorities for the DOI Wildland Fire Management program for 2005.

This funding level will enable the program to construct or repair fire stations, firefighter quarters, and other facilities for the expanded fire readiness personnel and resources. Buildings and facilities in disrepair will be brought up to current safety standards. Successful implementation of the NFP requires the correction of critical health and safety-related facility problems as well as the installation of facilities that improve the suppression response capability required to keep fires small, and reduce the threat to structures, municipal watersheds, and wildlife habitat in the wildland urban interface. With sufficient fire facilities and infrastructure, the program will be capable of maintaining an acceptable state of readiness, provide full support for suppression activities, and enhance fuels treatment capability.

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT FIVE YEAR CONSTRUCTION / DEFERRED MAINTENANCE PLAN SUMMARY, 2006 - 2009				
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	BUREAU	STATE	DOI SCORE	COSTS **
2006 Projects				
Alligator River NWR Fire Cache/office/dispatch	FWS	NC	703	350,000
Balsam Gap Engine/Equipment Storage Renovation	NPS	NC	340	50,000
Battle Mountain Air Tanker Base Phase 1	BLM	NV	875	2,034,973
Billings FS	BLM	MT	860	1,175,000
Blue Ridge Parkway OTEEN Incident Command Center	NPS	NC	340	30,100
Bridger FS	BLM	MT	850	1,302,400
Bruneau Guard Station	BLM	ID	640	952,000
Cody Dispatch	BLM	WY	720	1,000,000
Colorado Monument Engine Storage Building	NPS	CO	350	88,700
Colter Bay - construct two engine bays	NPS	WY	100	198,750
Crater Lake Fire Facility	NPS	OR	100	1,248,000
Devils Lake WMD Vehicle storage/office/cache	FWS	ND	610	224,800
Dubois FS	BLM	ID	810	800,000
Emergency Repairs and Maintenance	DOI			1,393,147
Grand Traverse Office & Garage	BIA	MN	100	295,000
Interagency Fire Use Module Dorm at Yellowstone	NPS	MT	100	200,000
Joshua Tree NP - Partnership to Construct an Interagency Dispatch Facility	NPS	CA	100	225,000
Lakeview Seat Base Improvements	BLM	OR	645	135,920
Mid-Atlantic Fire Management Area Facility	NPS	PA	100	476,100
Monticello FS	BLM	UT	860	1,066,824
Necedah NWR Engine storage facility/Cache/Office	FWS	WI	730	585,400
Northern Pueblos Helitack Facility	BIA	NM	100	351,000
Olancho Fire Station, Phase II	BLM	CA	955	1,004,000
Pocatello FS #6	BLM	ID	810	800,000
Pocatello HS Crew Quarters	BLM	ID	600	950,000
Ramah Navajo Equipment Storage	BIA	NM	100	200,000
Ramah Navajo Training Facility	BIA	NM	100	200,000
San Bernard NWR Engine Storage Office Cache	FWS	TX	895	765,348
Sequoia Fire Management Operations, Phase 2	NPS	CA	100	606,500
Sisseton Equipment Storage Build Fire Cache and Engine Storage	BIA	SD	100	218,900
Southern Pueblo Agency Communications Facility	BIA	NM	100	25,938
Uintah and Ouray Storage Build Fire Cache and Engine Storage	BIA	UT	100	683,800
Walkill NWR Vehicle storage, Office, Cache	FWS	NJ	520	362,400
TOTAL 2006				20,000,000

2007 Projects				
Alabama-Coushatta Office and Engine Storage	BIA	OK	100	208,000
Battle Mountain ATB #2	BLM	NV	875	1,420,072
Bonneville HS Crew Quarters	BLM	UT	820	2,265,263
Cedar City Interagency Equipment Storage	BLM	UT	465	555,000
Chase Lake NWR Vehicle storage/office/cache	FWS	ND	550	210,000
CM Russell NWR Vehicle storage office cache	FWS	MT	640	390,000
Concho Office and Engine Storage	BIA	OK	100	275,600
Craig HS Crew Quarters	BLM	CO	900	1,501,000
Detroit Lakes WMD Fire Cache & Office	FWS	MN	100	142,000
Elko HS Crew Quarters	BLM	NV	400	1,000,000
Emergency Repairs and Maintenance	DOI			681,070
Fergus Falls WMD Office Cache	FWS	MN	880	136,530
Flint Hills NWR Fire Crew Bunkhouse	FWS	KS	300	437,549
Hidden Valley FS	BLM	CA	920	2,443,000
Hiouchi Fire Station Renovation	NPS	CA	750	361,900
Kahuku Ranch Fire Facilities	NPS	HI	300	2,745,300
Leopold Vehicle Storage, Office & Cache	FWS	WI	475	273,000
Malta FS	BLM	ID	810	850,000
Northern Pueblos Picuris Guard Station	BIA	NM	100	325,520
Shenandoah South District Engine Storage	NPS	VA	100	335,196
Silver State HS Crew Quarters	BLM	NV	400	1,000,000
St. Marks NWR Crew Bunk House	FWS	FL	669	330,000
Turnbull Fire Vehicle Pole Shed	FWS	WA	505	200,000
Wild West Upgrade	BLM	ID	180	414,000
Yakima Warehouse for Capitalized Equipment	BIA	WA	100	1,500,000
TOTAL 2007				20,000,000
2008 Projects				
Baker FS	BLM	OR	810	420,400
Billings Fire Cache (BIA) Phase 1 interagency	BIA/BLM	MT	820	1,896,400
Blackwater NWR Vehicle Storage, Office & Cache	FWS	MD	790	600,000
Blue Ridge Fire Cache Renovation at Highlands District	NPS	NC	100	28,160
Brazoria NWR Engine Storage/office cache	FWS	TX	895	765,348
Burns Junct. Remodel	BLM	OR	780	160,000
Carolina Sandhills NWR Vehicle Storage, Office & Cache	FWS	NC	703	650,000
Central Utah Interagency Dispatch (Richfield)	BLM	UT	764	1,952,000
Ekalaka FS	BLM	MT	680	1,302,400
Emergency Repairs and Maintenance	DOI			187,453
Grand Teton & Bridger Teton Fire Operations Building, Phase I	NPS	WY	475	1,777,700
Great Smoky Mt. Headquarters Fire Facility, Phase I	NPS	TN	425	1,660,500
Lake Woodruff NWR Vehicle Storage, Office & Cache	FWS	FL	540	400,000
Lewistown Air Attack	BLM	MT	770	515,000
Long Island NWRC Vehicle Storage, Office, Cache	FWS	NY	300	210,000

Bureau of Land Management**2005 Budget Justifications**

Lookout Mountain LV	BLM	OR	680	48,000
Mescalero Equipment Storage	BIA	NM	100	200,000
Mescalero Fire Training Facility	BIA	NM	100	208,000
Moab FS	BLM	UT	860	1,085,300
Navajo Helitack facility	BIA	AZ	100	130,000
Nephi FS	BLM	UT	780	1,120,930
Pt. Reyes Flammable Storage Lockers	NPS	CA	100	27,500
Rachel Carson NWR Vehicle Storage, Office & Cache	FWS	ME	490	225,000
Tooele FS - SLC Helitack	BLM	UT	794	976,766
Twin Falls Air Ops Building	BLM	ID	750	880,000
Vernon Engine & Equipment Building	BLM	UT	765	822,143
Western Oregon NWRC (Finley NWR) Vehicle storage office cache	FWS	OR	300	250,000
White River FS	BLM	CO	840	1,501,000
TOTAL 2008				20,000,000
2009 Projects				
Alaska Fire Service Smokejumper Tower Replacement	BLM	AK	1,000	249,000
Anahuac NWR Vehicle storage office cache	FWS	TX	845	780,000
Blackfeet Program Management Office and garage	BIA	MT	590	1,600,000
Blackfoot Fire Station Quarters and Engine Barn	BLM	ID	825	1,700,000
Blackwater NWR Vehicle storage	FWS	MD	400	60,000
Cape Cod Fire Cache Restoration	NPS	MA	350	410,417
Chimney Peak Fire Station	BLM	CA	762	1,250,000
Des Lacs NWR Engine storage cache office	FWS	ND	490	660,000
Eastern Great Basin Coordination Center	BLM	UT	664	1,550,500
Emergency Repairs and Maintenance	DOI			27,577
Grand Teton NP and Bridger Teton NF - co-locate fire operations building (Phase II)	NPS	WY	475	1,777,700
Great Smoky Mt. Headquarters Fire Facility, Phase II	NPS	TN	425	1,660,500
Green & Bryant Lookouts	BLM	OR	750	238,000
Idaho Falls Fire Station 2	BLM	ID	140	750,000
North Utah Interagency Dispatch - Salt Lake City	BLM	UT	698	1,222,256
Northern Pueblos - Santa Clara Guard Station	BIA	NM	100	325,520
Pea Ridge Fire Cache Construction	NPS	AR	350	50,300
Pt. Reyes, Hagmaier Barn Renovation	NPS	CA	350	112,100
Sacramento NWR Vehicle storage office cache	FWS	CA	680	564,000
SE Utah Disp (Moab)	BLM	UT	790	3,617,707
South Fork Fire Station Barracks	BLM	CA	895	515,000
Tewaukon NWR Fire Office Addition	FWS	ND	550	204,000
Tooele Helibase	BLM	UT	704	675,423
TOTAL 2009				20,000,000

** The candidate projects for 2006-2009 will be revised based upon actual funding levels.

ACTIVITY: WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS**SUBACTIVITY: RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY**

(\$000)

Bureau		2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) Dec(-) from 2004
Research and Technology	\$	7,948	7,901	0	+99	8,000	+99
	FTE	3	3	0	0	3	0
BLM	\$	7,948	7,901	0	+99	8,000	+99
	FTE	3	3	0	0	3	0

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2005 budget for the Joint Fire Science Program is \$8,000,000 and 3 FTE. The Joint Fire Science Program is a \$16 million program, jointly funded by the U.S. Forest Service and DOI, designed to provide a scientific basis and rationale for implementing fuels management, fire use activities, and post-fire stabilization and rehabilitation with a focus on activities that will lead to the development and application of tools for managers. The JFSP sponsors applied research to assist field managers in making decisions on the most appropriate tools and techniques for successful fire suppression, fuels treatment, and post-fire rehabilitation. The program plays a key role in the delivery of information, techniques, and tactics to improve fire suppression operations and hazardous fuel treatments. Several of the principal purposes for the JFSP are fuels mapping and inventory, scheduling and prioritizing of fuels treatments, and monitoring and evaluation of fuels treatments.

Firefighting organizations must make quick and effective decisions as they battle wildfires – all in the face of great uncertainty, complexity, and changing conditions. Researchers are developing tools for better prediction of local fire weather, fire behavior and smoke dispersal. Better prediction means cost-savings in decisions about how to use firefighting resources and ensure greater safety for firefighters and the public.

The JFSP program is a six agency partnership, including the USDA Forest Service and five Interior bureaus: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey. The program is managed by an appointed, 10-person Governing Board including five from the USDA Forest Service and one from each of the Interior bureaus. This arrangement complements the funding, half from the USDA Forest Service and half from Interior. Day-to-day activities are conducted on behalf of the Governing Board by a small staff located at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. The staff includes a program manager, a fire technology transfer specialist, and a program assistant.

The JFSP original direction, consisting of four principal purposes, was included in the 1998 Appropriation and the ensuing Joint Fire Science Plan. Given direction provided in the 2001 National Fire Plan and the 2003 Healthy Forests Initiative, field-level demand for research to provide best available science in support of fuels treatment and fire management activities has steadily increased. For example, additional information is needed about the effects of various fuels management activities on certain invasive plants, soil resources, and the effects of wildfires on the environment. These questions need to be answered for *National Environmental Policy Act* activities, project level planning, landscape level decisions on fuels treatment strategies, and the appropriate response to wildland fire.

A fire technology transfer specialist position has been established to help ensure that JFSP deliverables are efficiently and effectively transferred to field units, the end users of JFSP-sponsored research. The JFSP estimates that, by 2005, about 100 research deliverables will have been completed and delivered to field units. The JFSP anticipates that these science activities will help ensure rapid implementation of wildland fire and fuel projects by providing best available science to support the activities.

2003 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2003, the JFSP:

- Selected and awarded 54 projects following independent, external peer review. Most of the projects are three-year projects, scheduled for completion in 2006. The 2003 JFSP annual Business Summary, in press, will include a summary of the 2003 projects.
- Co-sponsored a series of three workshops (Oregon State University, University of Arizona, and Colorado State University). Each workshop included about 100 land managers and research scientists who met to collectively determine the highest research needs and priorities. These three sites were selected to capitalize on the recent Biscuit, Rodeo-Chediski, and Hayman Fires. A complete "General Technical Report" is in press and an executive summary of the workshops is posted at http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/about/programs/fsd/exec_summ072203.pdf.
- Conducted its annual Principal Investigator Workshop. The purposes of the workshop are to obtain progress reports from each active, JFSP-funded project, provide a forum for interaction between managers and scientists, provide a forum for resolving issues and discrepancies among linked or sequential projects, and provide a networking opportunity for scientists and managers working on related issues.

2004 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

	2003 Actual	2004 Plan	2004 Plan versus 2003 Actual
Fire research projects initiated*	53	40	-13
* Selection of research projects takes place in March of each year. The number of projects to be funded depends upon the costs of the selected highest priority projects.			

The Joint Fire Sciences Program is taking the lead role in facilitating the development of new monitoring standards for hazardous fuels reduction and burned area rehabilitation. This effort was authorized by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) and will result in field guidance to be utilized by those programs beginning in 2005. It has become increasingly clear, following several GAO Reports, that monitoring is lacking in many Federal wildland management activities. A monitoring steering group has been established and has begun its work. It is anticipated that a large workshop, consisting of about 75 Federal land management agencies and their non-Federal partners will be conducted in the spring of 2004 to flesh out some detail for the monitoring framework and provide a report and recommendations to the WFLC.

In October 2003 the JFSP posted four new AFPs. These closed on December 15. The JFSP received 178 proposals. Peer review panels are being conducted in late January and early February, 2004. The Governing Board will meet in mid-March, 2004 to review proposals and peer review comments, and select proposals for funding. The JFSP projects that, with available funding, it will be able to fund approximately 40 to 50 new projects. This will raise the number of completed or ongoing projects, since inception of the JFSP, to about 275 projects.

JUSTIFICATION OF 2005 PROGRAM CHANGES

2005 PROGRAM CHANGES

	2005 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
\$(000)	8,000	+99
FTE	3	0

The FY 2005, budget request for Research and Technology is \$8,000,000, a program increase of \$99,000 from the 2004 estimated level. This increase will maintain the DOI share of the research program created by Congress.

ACTIVITY: WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS

(\$000)

Bureau		2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) / Dec(-) from 2004
Fire Suppression	A/						
B/	\$	159,309	192,903	0	+28,620	221,523	+28,620
Bureau Of Land Management	\$	75,204	99,942		TBD	TBD	TBD
Bureau Of Indian Affairs	\$	60,048	53,243		TBD	TBD	TBD
Fish And Wildlife Service	\$	4,780	7,444		TBD	TBD	TBD
National Park Service	\$	19,277	32,274		TBD	TBD	TBD
Emergency Supplemental	\$	[+225,000]	[+98,416]				

A/ The program does not budget for FTE in the Suppression activity. Base time for firefighting personnel is funded by the Preparedness budget activity.

B/ The distribution of Suppression funds in 2005 will depend upon an analysis of the expected fire season at the beginning of FY 2005.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The Wildland Fire Management Suppression Operations budget activity funds the emergency and unpredictable aspects of the Department's wildland fire management program. Suppression operations include the total spectrum of management actions taken on wildland fires in a safe, cost-effective manner, considering public benefits and values to be protected and consistent with resource objectives and land management plans. Emergency actions taken during and immediately following a wildfire to stabilize the soil and structures to prevent erosion, floods, landslides, and further resource damage are included in this activity. Emergency stabilization actions may be performed within one year of containment of a fire, and monitored for up to three years after containment.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2005 budget request for Suppression Operations is \$221,523,000, an increase of \$28,620,000 over the 2004 enacted appropriation. This activity supports the Serving Communities mission goal from the Department's draft Strategic Plan by providing protection of lives, resources and property from wildland fire. Funding requests are guided by the historical 10-year average of suppression expenditures, adjusted for inflation. Suppression costs include

the extraordinary costs (overtime, hazard pay, etc.) incurred by fire line, command, and support personnel; all wages for temporary emergency firefighter personnel; aircraft flight operations and ramp support; logistical services; supplies and equipment (including replacement of lost or damaged capital and expendable equipment); contracts for goods and services; administrative support directly associated with incidents; and immediate measures to stabilize soil damaged by fire suppression efforts.

Fire severity funding is used to improve initial attack response capabilities when extreme fire conditions occur. Extreme fire conditions arise when fire seasons start earlier than normal, last longer than normal, or exceed average high fire danger ratings for prolonged periods. These funds are typically used to temporarily increase firefighting staffing, pay for personnel and equipment, pre-position suppression forces in areas of abnormally high fire danger; conduct additional aerial reconnaissance; and acquire other supplemental contractual services. The use of funds for severity purposes is based on expected weather conditions, fuel conditions, and availability of resources.

In 2003 the Department successfully controlled more than 97% of unwanted wildland fires during initial attack. The increase in initial attack success from 92% in the 2000 pre-National Fire Plan season to 97% in both the 2002 and 2003 fire seasons demonstrates the effectiveness of increasing initial response capability achieved under the Plan. The Department and the Forest Service are now shifting more attention toward improving the effectiveness and cost efficiency of extended attack on large fires. A large fire cost containment and review process begun in 2003 will continue in 2004. Large fire cost review teams are analyzing the cost efficiency of various aspects of fire suppression, including appropriate management response, aviation support, incident management, and contract support.



An air tanker drops retardant during active wildfires in an effort to save homes.

When the appropriate management response to a wildfire is initial attack, high per acre initial attack success avoids:

- Substantially higher aggregate suppression costs
- Significant resource damage
- Loss of economic benefits from tourism and resource-dependent industries
- Loss of community infrastructure (homes, roads, etc.)

The average annual cost for both DOI and Forest Service suppression operations continues to increase. Wildland firefighting costs are

increasing due, in part, to costs associated with suppression in areas of high hazardous fuel loads, large aircraft and helicopter operations, and the increasing complexity of suppression in the wildland urban interface.

10-Year Wildfire History

Year	Fires	Acres
1994	114,049	4,724,014
1995	130,019	2,315,730
1996	115,025	6,701,390
1997	89,517	3,372,616
1998	81,043	2,329,709
1999	93,702	5,661,976
2000	122,827	8,422,237
2001	84,079	3,555,138
2002	88,458	6,937,584
2003	57,578	3,959,223
10-Year Average	97,630	4,797,962

The figures in this table include all reported wildfires in the U.S.

FIRE SUPPRESSION COST CONTAINMENT EFFORTS:

- The WFLC has directed that a high level panel comprised of State, local, Tribal and Federal representatives, and incident team members, representing a mix of on-the-ground and policy expertise, be convened to examine cost containment issues in a broader, land management-based scope to integrate suppression and vegetation management.
- Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Reviews, begun in 2003, will be continued in 2004. These reviews provide WFM leaders with detailed on-the-ground cost information on which to make more cost-efficient resource decisions.
- The WFLC adopted the following near-term action items to address Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review findings.
 - Develop incident cost-share agreement guidelines so agreements can be in place prior to start of the local fire season. Make specialists available to area or incident command to oversee cost-share agreement development.
 - Resolve problems with the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis process to improve timeliness and practicality for field use.
 - Correct problems with the automated Resource Ordering and Status System identified in 2003, its first year of use.
 - Strengthen oversight and financial management on incident command teams by adding to the cadre of trained incident business advisors and contract officer's representatives.
 - Commission a thorough, objective study to provide findings and recommendations to strengthen the appropriate use of contract crews.
 - Conduct an analysis of the use of aviation resources and the associated costs, and develop strategies to ensure that cost efficiency and effectiveness are considered when using aviation resources

Actions in Response to the Program Analysis Rating Tool

In response to OMB's PART assessment, in 2003 the agencies addressed the issue of rapidly rising suppression costs by:

- (1) establishing review teams to evaluate and develop cost containment strategies;
- (2) establishing a blue ribbon panel to review the cost-effectiveness of large fire aviation resources; and
- (3) revising incident command procedures to improve reporting of fire suppression spending.

Additional work remains to be done to respond to the PART recommendation to ensure appropriate cost-sharing agreements with States.

Overall, 2003 was a below average year for wildfire activity. Interagency coordination and pre-positioning of preparedness resources resulted in a 97% initial attack success rate on fires on Federal lands. On Federal lands, 17,817 fires were reported of which only 437 escaped initial attack and DOI-managed lands had 7,706 fires, of which only 205 escaped. Interior managed over 428,000 acres for wildland fire use, mostly in Alaska. Nationwide, 63,269 reported fires burned 3,959,223 acres.

The 2003 fire season was characterized by:

- The fire season started slowly. Wetter than normal conditions in the West delayed the onset of significant fire activity. On May 31, more than 400,000 acres had burned, about half of the ten-year average for that date.
- Fire activity in Arizona and New Mexico escalated in May and continued well into July. Firefighters battled more than 2,800 fire starts in the Southwest. The Aspen fire near Tucson, Arizona, ignited on June 17, spread rapidly forcing hundreds of residents to evacuate. Residents of Summerhaven were devastated by the fire that destroyed 323 homes. The fire was contained on July 18 at nearly 85,000 acres.
- A strong and persistent ridge of high pressure dominated the weather pattern over the West, leading to one of the hottest and driest summers in the West and one of the coolest and one of the top ten wettest summers in the East. It was the warmest summer ever in Nevada, second hottest in Oregon, and third warmest for Idaho. Washington reported its driest summer on record and New Mexico its driest for July.
- Extreme burning conditions throughout the West in the summer: drought, heavy fuel loads, insect and disease, and above average summer temperatures.
- Below average fire activity except in Northern Rockies. The Northern Rockies experienced above average fire activity. More than 700,000 acres burned and 96 structures were destroyed. Nearly 20,000 firefighters and support personnel were assigned at the peak of activity.
- A series of lightning storms sparked 3,660 fires between July 20 and 31 throughout the Northwest, Northern Rockies, and Eastern Great Basin. By the end of July, several fires in western Montana forced hundreds of residents to evacuate and threatened facilities and structures in Glacier National Park. Smoke impacted areas as far as Canada.
- The National Preparedness Level (PL), the condition or degree of being ready to cope with a potential fire situation, was at PL 4 on July 20 and increased to the highest level, PL 5, on July 24. The National Preparedness Level remained at PL 5 for 39 days.

- On August 1, more than 30 large fires burned in 11 western states causing a competition for fire suppression resources.
- August 24, an Army battalion from Fort Hood, Texas, was needed to assist civilian firefighting crews on the firelines in Montana.
- More help was requested from our foreign partners in Australia and New Zealand, and by August 27, more than 50 operations management personnel were assigned to fires in western Montana.
- California experienced a great deal of fire activity driven by the Santa Ana winds during October. Fifteen large fires consumed more than 750,000 acres. According to the San Bernardino Joint Fire Information Center and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 3,640 homes, 33 commercial properties, and 1,141 other structures were destroyed by these destructive fires.

2004 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Beginning in 2004, the WFM program will fund emergency stabilization in the suppression operations budget activity. Emergency stabilization of severely burned areas, or those damaged by suppression actions, is carried out immediately after wildland fires to prevent resource damage and stabilize erodible soils or structures. These emergency activities are conducted in the period immediately following a fire and may extend, under certain circumstances, for up to one year after the fire is contained. Emergency stabilization activities control threats to life, property, and natural resources from the after effects of ground cover loss, such as mud flows, erosion of roads and stream beds, and siltation of streams and rivers from accelerated erosion. Longer-term rehabilitation will be funded under the Burned Area Rehabilitation budget activity.

FireCode: FireCode is a new interagency IT system, jointly developed by DOI and the Forest Service, that gives the fire management agencies the capability to rapidly and accurately report the total Federal cost for suppression of any large fire. Fire dispatchers access a secure internet site to establish a cost code for each new incident that requires a Federal response. Every agency that responds to the incident uses the same cost code in their respective financial systems. FireCode was developed in response to Congressional direction for the National Fire Plan agencies to develop a method to standardize fire incident financial coding for fire suppression and subsequent emergency stabilization. Standardizing the fire incident cost code will provide the capability to aggregate the full costs of multi-jurisdictional fire suppression incidents. The system was developed in 2003 and began operation in 2004.

JUSTIFICATION OF 2005 PROGRAM CHANGES

2005 PROGRAM CHANGES

	2005 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
\$(000)	221,523	+28,620

The FY 2005, budget request for Suppression Operations is \$221,523,000 a program increase of \$28,620,000 from the 2004 estimated level. This funding level will enable the Department to

respond to an average level of wildland fire. Over the past ten years, from 1994 through 2003, an average of 97,630 fires has burned an annual average of 4,797,962 acres. The 10-year average cost has increased substantially as a result of these expensive fire seasons.

Fire Suppression Operations Performance Summary

DOI Strategic Goal: Serve Communities							
End Outcome Goal: Protect lives, resources, and property							
Outcome Measures:	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Planned: Budget Just- ifications	2004 Planned: Revised Final	2005 Planned	Change in Perfor- mance (2004 : 2005)	2008 Long Term Target
Damage to communities and the environment from severe, unplanned and unwanted wildland fire are reduced (SP: SEM.1.003) <u>A/</u>	NA	NA	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Number of homes and significant structures lost as a result of wildland fire (SP: SEM.1.005) <u>A/</u>	1,200	4,090	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Intermediate Outcome Goal 1: Improved fire management.							
Outcome Measures:							
Number of acres burned by unplanned and unwanted wildland fires (SP: SIM.1.01.002) <u>B/</u>	7,182,979	3,959,223	NA	4,797,962	4,797,962	0	4,797,962
Primary Outputs funded by this subactivity:							
Fire suppression (# of fires). <u>B/</u>	88,458	57,578	NA	97,630	97,630	0	97,630

Notes:

A/ Among the major goals for Wildland Fire Management are to lose no homes to wildfire and to prevent damage to communities and the environment. Numerical expressions of those goals have not been developed.

B/ The numbers of fires and acres burned are national totals, not just those on Interior-managed lands because DOI firefighters participate in fire suppression actions on all lands, whether Federal, State, Tribal, or privately-owned.

ACTIVITY: HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION

(\$000)

		2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) / Dec(-) From 2004
HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION	\$	185,627	183,896	+386	+25,000	209,282	+25,386
	FTE	1,426	1,426		+28	484	+28
Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fuels Reduction	\$	111,178	109,884	+232	+25,000	135,116	+25,232
	FTE	706	726		+28	754	+28
Non-WUI Hazardous Fuels Reduction	\$	74,449	74,012	+154	0	74,166	+154
	FTE	720	700		0	700	0

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The hazardous fuels reduction budget activity includes the planning, all operational aspects, and monitoring of treatments to reduce fuel loads and promote ecosystem health in forests and rangelands. Methods for fuels reduction include prescribed fire, mechanical, and chemical treatments or a combination of methods. Hazardous fuels reduction treatments are performed in the wildland urban interface (WUI) and in forests and rangelands outside the WUI.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2005 budget request for reducing fuels in the WUI is \$135,116,000 and 754 FTE. The 2005 budget request for non-WUI hazardous fuels reduction is \$74,166,000 and 700 FTE. The monies will enable DOI bureaus to reduce fire risk on an estimated 377,000 WUI and 723,000 non-WUI acres in over forty states.

This budget activity supports the President's Healthy Forests Initiative, the Department's Resource Protection mission goal and the strategy of restoring and maintaining proper functioning of watersheds and landscapes. It also supports the Department's goal of Serving Communities and the strategy of improving fire management. It does so by reducing the threat wild fire poses to homes, business, infrastructure, and landscapes of community value; by improving forest and rangeland health; by lessening the risk of air and water pollution associated with abnormally severe wild fire; and by reducing unnaturally high mortality to plants, animals, insects, and microscopic organisms associated with such fires.

These program goals are accomplished by removing hazardous fuels from the Nation's forests, woodlands, and grasslands using prescribed fire, mechanical methods, herbicides, and

biological means. Removal of fuel reduces fire intensity, slows fire spread, and improves the ability of fire fighters to more safely and efficiently suppress fires.

The program encompasses all aspects of hazardous fuel removal including: fuels inventories and assessment, planning and analysis, regulatory compliance, project selection, site preparation, fuels removal, and monitoring and evaluation. As directed by Congress, projects are selected in concert with local, State, and Tribal partners.

FACTORS AFFECTING FUELS REDUCTION COSTS

- All projects, from the simplest small prescribed fire to the largest multi-jurisdictional multi-treatment project require planning, preparation, and program overhead.
- Direct on-the-ground treatment costs vary widely depending upon size, location, fuels, treatment type, and proximity to communities. In 2003, treatment costs ranged from approximately \$1.50 per acre for large aerially-ignited prescribed burns of Florida sawgrass, to over \$5,000 per acre for labor-intensive small mechanical treatments in forested WUI areas.
- DOI manages numerous homeowner education projects in the WUI which are highly effective, however, the costs of these projects do not directly result in treated acres.
- In 2003, DOI bureaus were able to significantly increase acres treated in the WUI by using over \$40 million in funds carried over from 2002.

The program continues to make improvements in efficiency and effectiveness by making increased use of common methods and systems across bureau and land management unit lines to accomplish its goals. For example, all DOI land managing agencies, along with the Forest Service, use the same computer-based program (the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System or NFPORS) to track the planning for, and accomplishment of, fuels treatments. A common template for complying with NEPA environmental assessment requirements is now in place and pilot projects using it have been completed in DOI agencies and the Forest Service. A standard NEPA categorical exclusion for fuels treatments is likewise now in place.

The LANDFIRE project was initiated in 2002 to develop a comprehensive package of spatial data layers, models, and tools in support of analyses for prioritization and planning of fuels treatments at both the national and local level. LANDFIRE is a satellite generated, field verified, mid-scale spatial data mapping and analysis tool that will define fire regimes, fuels condition classification and fire risk for analyzing aspects of fuels treatment projects, define fire potential for other wildland fire management applications, and identify ecosystem status. The LANDFIRE product will replace the current coarse scale mapping products. LANDFIRE products will enable land managers to better determine fire risks and set forest and rangeland health objectives at the watershed level.

After nearly one hundred years of fire suppression and past management activities, many forests, woodlands and rangelands are at risk of catastrophic wildfire. The American people, their property, and their environment are threatened by deteriorating forest and rangeland health. Federal forest and woodland condition have declined due to an increase in tree density, fuel buildup, changes in species composition, and the presence of exotic plants and diseases. Critical watersheds, threatened and endangered species habitat, commercial timber and

rangelands are increasingly at risk, threatening both public and firefighter safety and the ability of the land to support multiple resource uses and values.

In addition to the risk of catastrophic wildfire, western forests are currently experiencing significant insect mortality due to drought, overstocked forest and woodland conditions, and epidemic insect population levels. Exotic diseases, such as Sudden Oak Death, Port Orford Cedar Disease, and blister rust in 5-needle pine species are adding to the fuel loading, destroying critical wildlife habitat, and significantly impacting local communities and businesses. Fuels reduction treatments are a useful tool in helping to reduce the impacts of forest insects and diseases on communities and the environment.

On August 22, 2002, President Bush announced *Healthy Forests: An Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities* in recognition of the serious threat to the Nation's forests. The President identified several needs to be addressed through implementation of the Healthy Forests Initiative:

- 1) more timely, efficient and effective implementation of forest health projects;
- 2) the promise to balance old growth protection and production of a dependable, sustainable level of timber harvest in the Pacific Northwest;
- 3) the opportunity to utilize by-products of forest health and restoration activities and hazard fuel reduction treatments for commercial opportunities; and
- 4) the need for greater efficiency and better results in reducing wildfire threats to communities and the environment.

In his May 20, 2003 speech to Congress, the President again highlighted the need to "support the preservation of a great American treasure, our forests...Active forest management could have saved...millions more acres across America from the devastation of severe forest fires and insect damage."

The Hazardous Fuels Reduction program supports the goals of the President's Healthy Forests Initiative and the recently enacted *Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003*, the purpose of which is,

"To improve the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to plan and conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects on National Forest System lands and Bureau of Land Management lands aimed at protecting communities, watersheds, and certain other at-risk lands from catastrophic wildfire, to enhance efforts to protect watersheds and address threats to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire, across the landscape, and for other purposes."

The Department is working with the Forest Service to inform the public about the necessity for a nationwide partnership to restore America's forests, woodlands, and rangelands to fire-adapted conditions. Forests with reduced risks from fire and infestation will improve the environment and provide economic and aesthetic benefits to communities throughout the country. Healthy forests and rangelands also support a variety of resource uses.

Lands in need of fuels reduction remain at risk of severe, unplanned and unwanted wildfire every year. Conditions resulting from dead vegetation, overgrowth, ladder fuels, heat, and drought are such that fire on these lands may result in excessive adverse impacts to people and

the environment. Reducing fuel loads protects people, communities, and the environment from the ravages of unusually severe wildfires.

Since 2001, the initial year of the National Fire Plan, the productivity of the fuels reduction program has improved significantly each year. In 2003, The Forest Service and Interior combined reduced fuels on 2,712,182 acres. That is 4,238 square miles, equivalent to a 1^{2/3} mile-wide strip extending from Boston to San Francisco. The program now has a professional workforce to conduct fuels reduction planning and treatments nationwide; local and other private contractors are being hired with 50% of the on-the-ground treatment funding; the treatment selection process is carried out with State, local, and Tribal partners; and treatments are tracked using the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS), a web-based system used by the Department and the Forest Service.

Two training centers are maintained by the five wildland fire management agencies to provide agency employees with field-based prescribed fire experience better enabling the agencies to plan and implement prescribed fire operations. These two recognized centers of excellence work closely together and have exceeded their original goals because of the unique prescribed fire opportunities that they provide in the east and the west. The Forest Service and the Nature Conservancy partner with Interior in the operation and management of the two centers.

The National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (PFTC), located in Tallahassee, Florida, provides certifying prescribed burning experience to 140 students each year. Trainees treat over 40,000 acres in 200 projects of which 10,000 acres are in the WUI. Each student is able to experience burn planning, design, field techniques and site monitoring on as many as 16 prescribed fires during the 24-day program. In addition, four National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) prescribed fire classes are offered and university credit is available to students for completion of the field program. PFTC is able to offer extensive on-the-ground prescribed fire training because it is located in a part of the Southeast with a significant amount of land available for fuels treatment and a favorable climate for prescribed fire for extended periods of the year. The Center currently uses donated excess property engines and transport vehicles to support the fuels crews.

The Fire Use Training Academy (FUTA), located in Albuquerque, NM, blends four weeks of classroom training and four weeks of multi-agency prescribed burning experience on many fuel types in forest and range landscapes throughout the Southwest. The Academy's focus is to develop individuals as future fuels program managers by exposing them to an accelerated level of interagency prescribed burning and fuels types of the Southwest. The Academy provides field experience for 85 students annually by conducting approximately 25 projects that treat 30,000 acres, of which 3,000 are in the WUI. In addition, students gain experience in burn plan and monitoring plan development and layout of prescribed fire projects.

2003 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

	2003 Plan	2003 Actual	2003 Plan versus Actual
Acres treated in the WUI, total	307,000	480,110	+173,110 (+56.4%)
Acres treated outside the WUI, total	768,000	778,727	+10,727 (+1.4%)
Total acres treated	1,075,000	1,258,837	+183,837 (+17.1%)
Average gross cost per acre in the WUI	$\frac{\$111.25\text{m}}{307,000} = \362	$\frac{\$154.0\text{m}}{480,110} = \321	-\$41 per acre
Average gross cost per acre outside the WUI	$\frac{\$74.9\text{m}}{768,000} = \98	$\frac{\$86.6\text{m}}{778,727} = \111	+\$13 per acre
Average gross cost per acre in total	$\frac{\$186.2\text{m}}{1,075,000} = \173	$\frac{\$240.7\text{m}}{1,258,837} = \191	+\$18 per acre **

** The average cost per acre in total increased because of the 56% increase in expensive WUI acres treated.

Program performance in 2003 exceeded all targets for treating WUI and non-WUI acres. DOI agencies treated 480,110 WUI acres in 2003, 173,000 acres above the 307,000 acre WUI target. Treatments exceed the target by 56 percent. Treatments outside the WUI reached 778,727 acres compared to the 768,000 acre target. Overall, the agencies applied treatments to 1,258,837 acres compared to the 1,075,000 acre target, a performance that exceeded the total acreage target by 17 percent.



Piles of biomass ready for chipping at Sequoia-Kings Canyon NP after mechanical fuels reduction treatment.

Two factors contributed to the increase in treated acres relative to the 2003 plan. One was the availability of a significant amount of unobligated balances that were carried over into FY 2003 as a result of treatments that could not be completed in 2002. Of equal importance was the presence of a hazardous fuels reduction management and implementation infrastructure that includes pre-identified projects, contracting capability, properly trained Federal and private sector personnel, tracking systems, and other components that permitted the agencies to effectively use the carryover monies to treat high priority projects.

2004 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

The 2004 program performance continues Interior's increasing emphasis on protection of people and communities through expansion of treatments in the WUI which will nearly double compared with 2001 and increase further in 2005. The 2004 program will continue to emphasize the use of contractors, with contracts scheduled to account for at least 50 percent of on-the-ground treatment costs.

Performance in 2004 will not reach the total acreage levels of 2003 because of a reduction in funds carried over from 2003 compared to 2002. The Department began the year with an unobligated balance of \$56.2 million and ended the year with only \$13.2 million remaining. This availability of funding directly translated into a significant increase in acres treated.

	2003 Actual	2004 Original Plan	2004 Revised Plan	2004 Plan versus 2003 Actual
Acres treated in the WUI, total	480,110	307,000	331,798	-148,312 (-30.9%)
Acres treated outside the WUI, total	778,727	768,000	723,556	-55,171 (-7.1%)
Total acres treated	1,258,837	1,075,000	1,055,354	-203,483 (-16.2%)
Average gross cost per acre in the WUI	<u>\$154.0M</u> 480,110 = \$321	<u>\$111.26M</u> 307,000 = \$362	<u>\$109.88M</u> 331,798 = \$331	+\$10
Average gross cost per acre outside the WUI	<u>\$86.64M</u> 778,727 = \$111	<u>\$74.94M</u> 768,000 = \$98	<u>\$74.0M</u> 723,556 = \$102	-\$9
Average gross cost per acre in total	<u>\$240.7M</u> 1,258,837 = \$191	<u>\$186.2M</u> 1,075,000 = \$173	<u>\$183.9M</u> 1,055,354 = \$174	-\$17

In 2004, the program is taking a major step toward demonstrating the effectiveness of fuels reduction. The program is in the process of developing monitoring and reporting standards that will be used by all of the WFM bureaus beginning in 2005. Until now, each bureau had undertaken differing levels of post-treatment monitoring, using different criteria for evaluating effectiveness, and without a standard method for reporting results for the benefit of future treatment planners. Another major effort currently underway is the design of a standard curriculum for training fuels management specialists.

An interdepartmental fuels imaging prototype project, known as LANDFIRE, is being developed to help implement the National Fire Plan by providing spatial data and predictive models required for characterizing fuel conditions, vegetation types, and fire regime condition classes at national, regional, and local scales. This information will be used by all wildland fire management bureaus and their partners to help evaluate fire hazards, prioritize hazardous fuels reduction treatments both in wildlands and the wildland/urban interface, and for comprehensive

planning analysis within the Fire Program Analysis System. This project is a partnership between the USDA Forest Service Missoula Fire Sciences Lab, the USGS EROS Data Center, and The Nature Conservancy's Fire Learning Network, with funding provided by the Forest Service and Interior. In FY 2004 the Department of the Interior is providing \$800,000 for prototype development, and the Forest Service is providing \$1,200,000.

A LANDFIRE prototype covering central Utah and western Montana will be available for peer review and modification in 2004. The prototype will be modified as needed and mid-scale fuels condition mapping completed for the eleven western states in 2006, for the remainder of the contiguous states in 2008, and for Alaska in 2009. LANDFIRE will enable the agencies and their many partners to better prioritize landscapes most at-risk from catastrophic fire. Land managers will then be able to target fuels treatment to these priority areas.

ACTIVITY: HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION

SUBACTIVITY: WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE FUELS REDUCTION

(\$000)

Bureau		2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) / Dec(-) from 2004
WUI Fuels Reduction	\$	111,178	109,884	+232	+25,000	135,116	+25,232
	FTE	706	726	0	+28	754	+28
BLM	\$	64,332	60,531	+130	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
	FTE	427	434	0	+28	462	+28
BIA	\$	22,996	21,816	+27	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
	FTE	83	85	0	0	85	0
FWS	\$	12,655	11,121	+34	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
	FTE	71	75	0	0	75	0
NPS	\$	9,915	13,492	+41	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
	FTE	123	130	0	0	130	0
OS	\$	1,280	2,924	0	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
	FTE	2	2	0	0	2	0

* Hazardous fuels reduction projects for 2005 will be selected in May 2004 through a collaborative process with other Federal, State, Tribal, and local partners.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) hazardous fuels reduction program invests in projects that reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, mitigate hazards and restore fire-adapted ecosystems in high-risk wildland urban interface areas. All of the high priority WUI projects identified are selected through a collaborative process involving the Department, States, tribes, and local communities.

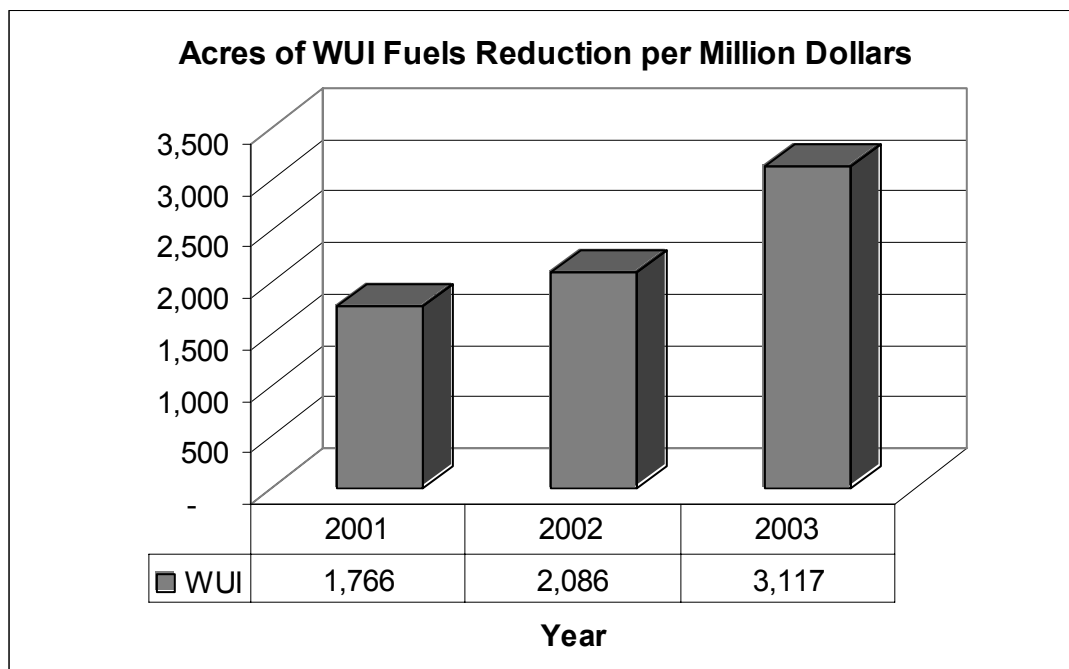
Hazardous fuels reduction in the WUI supports the Department's strategic goal of Serving Communities by supporting the end outcome of protecting lives, resources and property through the strategy of improving fire management. Hazardous fuels reduction projects remove excessive live or dead fuel to protect life and property, including communities at risk and sensitive municipal watersheds, as well as sensitive natural resources, including critical native plant communities and threatened and endangered species; and other socially important cultural resources. Much of the work in the WUI is accomplished using mechanical methods that can produce potentially valuable biomass byproducts.

2003 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

	2003 Plan	2003 Actual	2003 Plan versus Actual
Acres treated in the WUI, total	307,000	480,110	+173,110 (+56.4%)
Average gross cost per acre in the WUI	$\frac{\$111.25\text{m}}{307,000} = \362	$\frac{\$154.4\text{m}}{480,110} = \321	-\$41 per acre

In 2003, DOI bureaus had the most successful year in reducing the threats to communities from wildfires since the beginning of the National Fire Plan. Major accomplishments included:

- Removed excess hazardous fuels on 480,110 high priority acres in the WUI.
- Reduced carryover funding for WUI fuels reduction from \$36.7 million to \$5.4 million.
- Began intensive efforts to unify and equip the two national fuels reduction training centers to be able to deliver specialized training for fuels managers and resource specialists.



2004 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

The Department will treat more acres in the WUI in 2004 than originally planned. Fuels reduction in the WUI will exceed the goal of 307,000 by approximately 25,000 acres. At least 50 percent of the funding for WUI fuels reduction treatment will be directed to private sector contracts.

In 2004, the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior are working to develop a framework for monitoring fuels treatment results. Monitoring the effectiveness of the fuels treatment program is one of the four prime goals of the "10-Year Comprehensive Strategy" and its "Implementation Plan," plans embraced by the President's Healthy Forests Initiative and by Congress in the *Healthy Forests Restoration Act*. Under the guidance of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, an interagency monitoring framework is being developed that will permit evaluation of the success of fuels treatments in meeting hazard mitigation and natural resource management objectives, both locally and across landscapes.



Prescribed burning to remove fuel around buildings requires extra vigilance.

Long term monitoring of the success of treatments in achieving goals and objectives will be essential to validate or adjust the preparedness, hazardous fuels and vegetative change models being developed in the interagency Fire Program Analysis system. Monitoring also is required to validate the effectiveness of stewardship contracts in reducing hazardous fuels conditions.

	2003 Actual	2004 Original Plan	2004 Revised Plan	2004 Plan versus 2003 Actual
Acres treated in the WUI, total	480,110	307,000	331,798	-148,312 (-30.9%)
Average gross cost per acre in the WUI	<u>\$154.032M</u> 480,110 = \$321	<u>\$111.255M</u> 307,000 = \$362	<u>\$109.884M</u> 331,798 = \$331	-\$31

JUSTIFICATION OF 2005 PROGRAM CHANGES

2005 PROGRAM CHANGES

		2005 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	\$(000)	209,282	+25,000
	FTE	1,454	+28
WUI Fuels Reduction	\$(000)	135,116	+25,000
	FTE	754	+28

The FY 2005 budget request for Hazardous Fuels Reduction is \$209,282,000 and 1,454 FTE, a net program increase of \$25,000,000 and 28 FTE from the 2004 estimated level. The increase will be entirely focused on expanding and improving the program in the wildland urban interface.

Monitoring Results of Fuels Reduction (+\$8,000,000 and 26 FTE)

An increase of \$8,000,000 and 26 FTE will be directed to the use of the standard monitoring framework that will be developed in 2004. Monitoring fire effects and treatment success are essential to ensure cost efficient and timely management and treatment of highest priority needs. This strategic monitoring program will generate improved data regarding key performance measures such as the number of acres moved to a better condition class. It will result in landscape level evaluations of performance across agency boundaries and fulfill the monitoring requirements contained in the HFRA. The resulting data will be used to improve program effectiveness and reduce costs by improving the targeting of acres to be treated.

Rapid expansion of fuels treatments since 2001 has made it imperative that the bureaus assess the success of these activities in reducing wildland fire risk to communities and resources, mitigating post-fire impacts, and accomplishing resource management objectives. To begin the successful implementation of fuels treatment monitoring, a mix of fuels management specialists, contracting specialists, foresters, biologists range specialists, and other resource professionals will be hired and trained. These professionals will review environmental documents and conduct project compliance inspections, write and administer contracts for monitoring, expedite analyses of monitoring, and process the results of these activities to determine program effectiveness.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction Treatments (+\$12,800,000)

The danger of uncontrolled and unwanted wildfires continues to increase as a result of insects, disease, and fuel loads. The President and the Secretary have made the removal of hazardous fuels from our forests, woodlands, shrublands, and grasslands a high priority initiative for the Administration and Department, especially in WUI areas.



Bishop, California BLM fire personnel and Inyo National Forest crew hard at work feeding a chipper during the Chalfant Hazardous Fuels Removal Project.

An increase of \$12,800,000 will be used to remove excess hazardous fuels from an additional 45,000 acres in the WUI. This represents a 13.5 percent increase over the FY 2004 target and continues DOI's commitment to placing highest priority on protecting people and communities from severe wildland fire. Approximately 50 percent of the increase will reduce fuel loadings by mechanical methods including crushing, chipping, piling or removal, including biomass removal. Fifty percent of this increase will be directed to contractors to provide economic benefits to local and small companies and stimulate private investment in biomass products.

The additional treatments in 2005 will enable the Department to:

- use prescribed fire as a maintenance treatment after mechanical fuel reduction;
- remove brush or highly flammable grasses and forbs along roads, trails and recreational travel corridors to reduce risks of human caused fires;
- remove downed logs, snags and small trees and brush in shaded fuel breaks,
- establish defensible fuel profile zones, and community defense zones; and
- reestablish native plant species.

Training for Fuels Managers and Specialists (+\$500,000 and 2 FTE)

The Wildland Fire Management Agencies have a demonstrated need to develop a dedicated, rapid-paced fuels manager development program to respond to the growing workload and complexity of hazardous fuels reduction projects. Fuels specialists must have the ability to work with the public and other agencies in planning, contracting, and conducting fuels treatments – whether by prescribed fire, mechanical, or other means. This funding will enable the existing training academies to expand their prescribed fire programs to cover all aspects of fuels management, as well as contracting regulations, ESA and NEPA requirements, governmental relations, and public outreach.

A \$500,000 increase will enable the Fire Use Training Academy (Albuquerque, New Mexico) and the National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (Tallahassee, Florida), through their cooperative working relationship, to develop and initiate implementation of a specialized curriculum for fuels management specialists. Much of the content would be based on the newly approved Agriculture/Interior "Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide". This guide identifies the knowledge, skills, and abilities that a prescribed fire and fuels specialist needs to operate a low, moderate, or high complexity fuels program. The

curriculum will include, in addition to the existing prescribed fire courses, state of the art instruction on silviculture practices for forest thinning, mechanical methods of rangeland improvement, capabilities of various forms of mechanized equipment, and contract development and administration.

LANDFIRE Fuels Imaging System +\$3,700,000

The Interior share for LANDFIRE, the Landscape Fire and Resource Management Planning Tools Project, in 2005 will be \$4,500,000, an increase of \$3,700,000 over 2004. This amount will be matched by the Forest Service. Fire containment success is affected by factors in addition to the availability of adequate readiness resources. These include the severity of the fire season, fire behavior, and the geographic location and timing of unplanned and unwanted wildland fires. The mapping of vegetation and fuels, and the ecosystem and geophysical models provided by LANDFIRE will eventually improve the effectiveness with which fire management agencies respond to wildfire, design and implement hazard fuels projects, and restore fire-adapted ecosystems. In FY 2005, the fuels imaging system will move into a full implementation phase. Vegetation, fuels, and fire regime condition class maps will be produced along with a wide array of ecological and bio-physical models that will have wide applicability within the entire fire program. LANDFIRE development and implementation will ensure that these tools are available in time to meet the proposed development schedule of the comprehensive Fire Program Analysis system, as well as to provide improved planning and accountability for wildland/urban interface and other hazard fuels treatments. LANDFIRE data and models will be used to identify and prioritize wildland urban interface fuels problems, and document the success in modifying fuels to reduce the risk to property and natural resources. This request will increase the probability that the program will achieve or exceed the performance target in an average year.

The proposed increase for the LANDFIRE fuels imaging system will be implemented through a combination of technical and management staff at the USDA Forest Service Missoula Fire Sciences Lab and DOI bureaus, a partnership with The Nature Conservancy's Fire Learning Network and through contractors. Approximately half of the work will be accomplished through partnerships and contractors.

Development of LANDFIRE is expected to continue through 2009.

Wildland Urban Interface Hazardous Fuels Reduction Performance Summary

DOI Strategic Goal: Serve Communities							
End Outcome Goal: Protect lives, resources, and property							
Intermediate Outcome Goal: Improve fire management.							
Outcome Measures:	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Planned: Budget Just- ifications	2004 Planned: Revised Final	2005 Planned	Change in Perfor- mance (2004 : 2005)	2008 Long Term Target
Number of acres treated that are in the wildland-urban interface and are identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the 10-Year Implementation Plan (SP: SIM.1.01.003)	209,320	480,110	307,000	331,798	377,000	+45,000	400,000
Number of acres treated in the wildland-urban interface per million dollars gross investment (SIM.1.01.004)	<u>209,320</u> \$100.36M = 2,086	<u>480,110</u> \$154.0M = 3,117	<u>307,000</u> \$111.3M = 2,759	<u>331,798</u> \$109.9M = 3,020	<u>377,000</u> \$135.1M = 2,790	-230	3,000
Primary Outputs funded by this subactivity:							
Fuels reduction treatments by prescribed/natural fire implemented within the WUI. (acres)	69,505	218,573	TBD	124,625	142,000	+17,375	TBD
Fuels reduction treatments by mechanical means implemented within the WUI. (acres)	124,873	158,090	TBD	163,489	186,000	+22,511	TBD
Fuels reduction treatments by other means implemented within the WUI. (acres)	14,942	103,447	TBD	43,684	49,000	+5,316	TBD
Percent of prescribed fires conducted consistent with all Federal, State, Tribal, and local smoke management requirements (NK)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0	100%

ACTIVITY: HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION

SUBACTIVITY: NON-WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE FUELS REDUCTION

(\$000)

Bureau		2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) Dec(-) from 2004
Non-WUI Fuels Reduction	\$	74,449	74,012	+154	0	74,166	+154
	FTE	720	700	0	0	700	0
BLM	\$	28,969	31,042	+54	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
	FTE	282	275	0	0	275	0
BIA	\$	15,110	10,931	+11	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
	FTE	56	54	0	0	54	0
FWS	\$	12,356	12,562	+41	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
	FTE	152	148	0	0	148	0
NPS	\$	17,164	18,148	+48	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
	FTE	230	223	0	0	223	0
OS	\$	850	1,329	0	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
	FTE	0	0	0	0	0	0

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Funding for hazardous fuels reduction outside the WUI will be maintained in 2005 to enable the Department to continue to treat over 700,000 acres per year. Fuels reduction projects outside the wildland urban interface are focused on priority landscapes and are designed to initiate or complete restoration of fire adapted ecosystems. Hazardous fuels reduction treatments outside the WUI primarily support the Department's strategic plan goal to protect resources by maintaining or restoring the proper functioning of healthy ecosystems. Hazardous fuels reduction treatments remove excessive live or dead fuel to protect watersheds, sensitive natural resources, including critical native plant communities and threatened and endangered species, and important cultural resources. The Department works with other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and local communities to implement collaborative hazardous fuels programs that cross agency boundaries.

2003 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2003, the DOI bureaus reduced fuels on 778,727 acres in forests, rangelands, wildlife refuges, and parks. This is equivalent to 1,216.7 square miles. There was an improvement in condition class on 279,188 of those acres.

2004 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

	2003 Actual	2004 Original Plan	2004 Revised Plan	2004 Plan versus 2003 Actual
Acres treated outside the WUI, total	778,727	768,000	723,556	-44,444 (-5.8%)
Average gross cost per acre outside the WUI	<u>\$86.644M</u> 778,727 = \$111	<u>\$74.935M</u> 768,000 = \$98	<u>\$74.012M</u> 723,556 = \$102	+\$4

The revised plan for 2004 reflects the actual projects that were selected for accomplishment in May 2003. The original plan was a preliminary estimate from the previous December. The Department intends to treat at least 700,000 acres per year outside the WUI.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction Non-WUI Performance Summary

DOI Strategic Goal: Resource Protection							
End Outcome Goal: Improve the health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources that are DOI managed or influenced in a manner consistent with obligations regarding the allotment and use of water.							
Intermediate Outcome Goal 1: Restore and maintain proper function to watersheds and landscapes.							
Intermediate Outcome Measures:	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Planned: Budget Justi- fications	2004 Planned: Revised Final	2005 Planned	Change in Perfor- mance (2004 : 2005)	2008 Long Term Target
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class (SP: PIM.1.01.004)	UNK	279,188	474,500*	280,000	285,000	+5,000	300,000
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class – as a percent of total acres treated (PIM.1.005)	UNK	<u>279,188</u> 778,727 = 36%	<u>474,500</u> 768,000 = 62%*	<u>280,000</u> 723,556 = 39%	<u>285,000</u> 723,000 = 39%	+0	<u>300,000</u> 750,000 = 40%
Number of acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class per million dollars of gross investment (SP: PIM.1.01.006)	UNK	<u>279,188</u> \$86.64M = 3,222	<u>474,500</u> \$74.94M = 6,332*	<u>280,000</u> \$74.012M = 3,783	<u>285,000</u> \$74.17M = 3,843	+60	<u>300,000</u> \$75M = 4,000
Number of acres treated that are in condition classes 2 or 3 in fire regimes 1 through 3 outside of wildland-urban interface in total (PIM.1.01.008)	UNK	468,288	578,000*	440,000	440,000	+0	500,000
Number of acres treated that are in condition classes 2 or 3 in fire regimes 1 through 3 outside of wildland-urban interface as a percent of all acres treated (PIM.1.01.009)	UNK	<u>468,288</u> 778,727 = 60%	<u>578,000</u> 768,000 = 75%*	<u>440,000</u> 723,556 = 61%	<u>440,000</u> 723,000 = 61%	0	<u>500,000</u> 750,000 = 67%
Number of acres treated outside the wildland-urban interface per million dollars gross investment (SP: PIM.1.01.010)	<u>849,644</u> \$78.29M = 10,852	<u>778,727</u> \$86.64M = 8,988	<u>768,000</u> \$74.94M = 10,249	<u>723,556</u> \$74.012M = 9,776	<u>723,000</u> \$74.17M = 9,748	-28	<u>750,000</u> \$75M 10,000
Percent of prescribed fires conducted consistent with all Federal, State, Tribal, and local smoke management	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0	100%
Primary outputs funded by this subactivity:							
Fuel management treatments by prescribed/natural fire implemented outside the WUI. (acres)	635,392	567,152	TBD	561,004	561,000	-4	TBD
Fuel management treatments by mechanical means implemented outside the WUI. (acres)	148,451	102,456	TBD	115,088	115,000	-88	TBD
Fuel management treatments by other means implemented outside the WUI. (acres)	65,801	109,119	TBD	47,464	47,464	0	TBD

* The 2004 performance was estimated before a database existed for condition class improvements. Actual NFPORS 2003 data provides a realistic basis for projecting future accomplishments. Multiple treatments (e.g. mechanical or chemical treatment followed by prescribed fire) are often required for improvement in overall condition class.

ACTIVITY: BURNED AREA REHABILITATION

(\$000)

		2003 Actual*	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) / Dec(-) from 2004
Burned Area Rehabilitation	\$	19,870	24,198	+78	0	24,276	+78
	FTE	171	171	0	0	171	0
BLM	\$	15,654	15,282	+44	0	13,672	+44
	FTE	108	108	0	0	108	0
BIA	\$	630	4,029	+28	0	8,828	+28
	FTE	45	45	0	0	1	0
FWS	\$	3,469	4,085	+4	0	1,174	+4
	FTE	12	12	0	0	12	0
NPS	\$	117	802	+2	0	602	+2
	FTE	6	6	0	0	6	0

* FY 2003 data includes both emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, as this budget activity still included emergency stabilization costs in 2003. DOI actually obligated \$41.8 million in 2003 for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation of burned areas. The sources of funding included the 2003 appropriation, Section 102 transfers, and unobligated balances carried over from 2002.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

This activity begins the rehabilitation process for lands and resources damaged by uncharacteristically severe wildland fires. Areas damaged in this manner would not return to fire-adapted conditions without human intervention. Soil stabilization and the introduction of native and other desirable plant species are employed for up to three years following containment of a fire to return severely-burned areas to appropriate fire regimes and resource conditions.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2005 budget request for Burned Area Rehabilitation is \$24,276,000 and 171 FTE. This activity supports the Resource Protection goal from the Department's Strategic Plan by restoring and maintaining proper function to watersheds and landscapes by such actions as reseeding with native plants. The rehabilitation treatments begin the process of restoring the watersheds to fire-adapted conditions. Rehabilitation of burned areas also helps the WFM program accomplish the Serving Communities goal by protecting communities from damaging floods and mudslides.

Rehabilitation activities funded by the WFM appropriation continue for up to three years following containment of a fire. After three years, the bureau resource management programs assume responsibility for further landscape restoration in accordance with the land use plans and mission goals of the bureau that manages the land. Costs for emergency stabilization, conducted within the first year of fire control, will be charged to the suppression operations budget activity.

Damages to natural resources and property from wildfire have been increasing because more fires are burning with uncharacteristic severity. The Department of the Interior's burned area rehabilitation program initiates longer-term actions to repair damage caused by wildfire. Rehabilitation projects are designed to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover naturally from severe wildland fire damage. The goal is to begin the restoration of appropriate ecosystem structure, function, diversity, and dynamics according to resource management objectives defined in approved land management plans. The program seeks to establish resource conditions consistent with land management goals. Typical projects include seeding of native or other desirable vegetation, reforestation, road and trail rehabilitation, invasive plant treatments, fencing to prevent animals or humans from entering sensitive areas, actions to stabilize and prevent further degradation to archaeological and cultural resources, and monitoring to determine treatment efficacy.

The 2005 budget of \$24,276,000 for Burned Area Rehabilitation includes \$19,650,000 for rehabilitation projects and \$4,626,000 for the Native Plant Materials Development project. The funding for rehabilitation projects will be prioritized using a project selection process to improve the program's effectiveness and efficiency. The Department of the Interior goal is to contract for 50 percent of all approved project funding for fuels treatment and burned area rehabilitation work in 2004. The 2004 funding increase for rehabilitation will enhance program capability to increase the number of priority acres treated, achieve more cost effective performance, and help address GAO's finding of the rehabilitation program's inability to validate the effectiveness of stabilization and rehabilitation treatments.

The General Accounting Office recently noted that the rehabilitation program is unable to validate the effectiveness of stabilization and rehabilitation treatments. As the GAO pointed out in their April 2003 report, *Wildland Fires, Better Information Needed on Effectiveness of Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Treatments*:

"The departments do not, and we could not, determine the overall effectiveness of emergency stabilization and rehabilitation treatments because most land units do not routinely document monitoring results, use comparable monitoring procedures, collect comparable data, or report monitoring results to the agencies' regional or national offices. Consequently, the departments cannot compile, or verify the accuracy of monitoring results to determine overall treatment effectiveness or lessons learned."

These concerns are being addressed in 2004.

Use of Performance and Cost Management Data in the Burned Area Rehabilitation Program

- Used to assess if treatments reflect a reasonable cost, and provides a basis for asking questions why a treatment cost is high.
- Used to compare costs of similar treatments and ask questions on significant differences, e.g. why is the cost of monitoring is \$2 per acre in one state and \$20 per acre in another?
- Used to compare treatment effectiveness, e.g. is drill seeding more/less effective than aerial seeding?
- Used to compare to a market average and analyze contracting versus government costs.

Native Plant Material Development (NPMD) Project– This DOI program is managed and operated by the Bureau of Land Management to support the native plant restoration goals of all land management agencies. The program is moving from a short-term strategy of developing interagency native plant material production capacity to the long-term strategic goal of supply and management of native plant materials. This shift will take place over a few years with continued collection of seed for native plant germplasm collections in cooperation with USDA and other partners.

The Department has placed a high priority on building the NPMD project. The project will increase native seed production and meet the average demand for native seed for burned area



A Student Conservation Association volunteer collects seed of important rehabilitation species in the Mojave Desert.

rehabilitation work. This will include important wildlife habitat forage, and those that can help fight invasive exotic weed establishment. Native plant materials development emphasizes seed collection and testing, documenting source locations of native plant materials on public lands, and testing and development of new materials.

The NPMD Program includes public-private partnerships to increase the amount of seed available for use in public lands rehabilitation and restoration and involvement with partners to leverage funds. The BLM works with multiple federal agencies, State governments and Tribes. The NPMD relies upon contract growing of seed and wildland seed collection by private businesses.

2003 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2003 major accomplishments of the Burned Area Rehabilitation program included:

- DOI treated or monitored 2,360,934 acres of burned lands.
- The Forest Service and DOI standardized definitions and accounting practices for emergency stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration across the five agencies;
- DOI reseeded 412,825 acres of public lands burned by wildfires.

- BLM conducted Integrated Pest Management treatments on 3,819 acres to prevent the spread of noxious weeds.
- The Rattle Complex in Utah was one of the largest wildfire complexes managed by BLM totaling over 94,000 acres. Of the over 50,000 acres of lands under BLM management, 26,444 acres were reseeded with a mixture of native grass, forb, and shrub species. The Moab Field Office used mycorrhizal enhancements to improve the seed's germinating ability and chances for species survival.
- There was considerable concern that the 24 Command Fire that burned 163,884 acres of Department of Energy and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands in southeast Washington in 2000 would cause irreparable damage to the fragile arid land ecosystem. The fragile arid land ecosystem began its long road to recovery after interdepartmental emergency stabilization and rehabilitation work, including 12,553 acres of shrub steppe habitat stabilized with 880,750 shrub plants grown from 145 pounds of locally-collected native seed; 10,300 acres of nonnative invasive species controlled; and 287 culturally significant sites identified or protected.

Native Plant Material Development Project – Significant progress was made in the implementation of NPMD project. Major accomplishments in 2003 included:

- A new version of the synthesis of *North American Flora* was delivered to BLM with county level plant distribution information for the western states. This provides basic information on using geographically appropriate native plant materials.
- Germination protocol information was received for 85 species collected in Seeds of Success. This information was given to the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to pass along to growers who request seed from the project.
- BLM collected seed and documented sources of native plant materials for over 400 new populations and made germplasm collections in Seeds of Success with the help of Student Conservation Association teams stationed in CA, UT, CO, NV, and OR. These species are being cleaned and tested for seed quality and germination requirements in cooperation with Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Great Britain.
- BLM field offices entered into 49 contracts for private businesses to grow out native plant species from seed collected on public lands.
- ARS made two new germplasm releases of bottlebrush squirrel tail grass and one release of Indian ricegrass for use on BLM lands in time for growers to obtain the seed and plant in early fall of 2003.
- Plant selection and increase has begun for 18 of the 25 forb species being investigated for native plant materials development in the Great Basin Native Plant Selection and Increase Project; nine pollination studies have been started; genetic variability studies for nine species and four common garden studies are also in progress as part of this major effort to stabilize soils, fight invasive species establishment and restore sage grouse habitat as part of the Great Basin Restoration Initiative.
- Data was collected and maps prepared for the publication for a seed transfer guideline for fourwing saltbrush. Guidelines for Wyoming sagebrush and bitterbrush are under development.
- Seed of 17 sources of Indian ricegrass, big squirreltail, bottlebrush squirreltail, bluebunch wheatgrass, basin wildrye, Snake River wheatgrass, and green needlegrass were made available to the Utah Crop Improvement Association for entry into the buy-back option

program, a mechanism to utilize seed growers to increase seed for the second generation of seed growout.

- Publications to transfer technology of native seed including:
 - *Restoring Western Ranges and Wildlands* was completed in spring of 2003. This book provides background on philosophy, processes, plant materials selection, and seed and seeding technology for revegetating disturbed rangelands, emphasizing native species.
 - *A Rangeland Revegetation Equipment Catalog* describes types and operation of equipment designed or adapted for range and wildlife habitat improvement and disturbed land rehabilitation. Categories of equipment include: tractors, implements for controlling vegetation using fire or mechanical or chemical means, seedbed preparation, fertilizing and mulching, seeders and drills, specialized planters, seed collection, seed processing, and transport.

2004 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

	2003 Actual *	2004 Plan #	2004 Plan versus 2003 Actual
Burned Area Rehabilitation treatments or retreatments. (acres)	2,360,934	1,520,000	-840,934

Note: Refer to the section on "Establishing a Baseline for Rehabilitation Performance" for a description of this measure.

*2003 data includes emergency stabilization also because it was not shifted out of the Burned Area Rehabilitation budget to Suppression operations until 2004.

2004 estimate is based on 19% of acres burned on DOI-managed lands from 2001-2003. Actual acreage will vary from year to year.

The Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation program has been in existence for over 20 years; however, this program has been considered a collateral duty for operations, fuels, and resource staffs. As a result of its secondary status it has not received the management priority necessary to ensure program effectiveness and cost efficiency.

Beginning in 2004, burned area rehabilitation will be budgeted and managed separately from emergency stabilization (a joint Forest Service-Interior proposal, ratified by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council). Emergency stabilization treatments undertaken within one year of a fire will be funded with suppression operations dollars. Burned area rehabilitation funding will be focused on treatments necessary from one to three years after a fire while long-term (over three years) restoration will be a responsibility of bureau resource management and operations accounts. The decoupling of emergency stabilization from burned area rehabilitation will enable the program to begin to develop baseline cost data for the two post-fire activities. Prior to FY 2004, these costs have been combined, making baseline costs difficult to determine.

The 2004 budget of \$24,198,000 for Burned Area Rehabilitation includes \$19,572,000 for rehabilitation projects, and \$4,626,000 for the Native Plant Materials Development project. The funding for rehabilitation projects will be prioritized using a project selection process similar to that used for fuels reduction to improve the program's effectiveness and efficiency.

The 2004 increase included \$2,500,000 for rehabilitation treatments, including review and approval of project proposals, additional systematic on-the-ground monitoring and reporting of treatment results, and establishment of a permanent program management staff.

Standardized monitoring will be applied to all projects to determine the effectiveness of treatment and enable management practices to be adopted for improved effectiveness. Monitoring results will be compiled into summary reports documenting the effectiveness of rehabilitation treatments. These reports will be stored in a single electronic system accessible to all fuels managers and planners and rehabilitation specialists.

The 2004 increase will enhance DOI program capability. Four senior rehabilitation specialists, one from each bureau, will provide permanent program capability to implement national, regional, and state policy and coordination for emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation programs. These specialists will conduct rehabilitation plan reviews and make recommendations for funding approval, conduct technical program reviews and evaluations of state and regional programs and make recommendations for improvements, prepare and organize training programs, and coordinate for effective and consistent policy implementation. The program capability components of burned area emergency rehabilitation team support, seed warehouse operation and maintenance, and seed drill equipment are key components of an effective and responsive rehabilitation program. Permanent program capability is especially critical given the new and evolving Departmental policy and guidance for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation. A revised Departmental manual based on the WFLC decision has been coordinated with the Forest Service and is compatible so operations in the field will be comparable. In addition, a joint effort will finalize an interagency Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation Handbook for use by agency managers. An interagency team will continue to coordinate the various efforts needed to establish standards for treatment and monitoring. These standards will help field managers determine treatment needs, establish monitoring during the planning phase, and allow for management compliance reviews after treatments.

Scientists and other resource specialists will also be called upon to participate in rapid response teams to evaluate critical situations, such as the potential for landslides, floods, and debris flows that threaten towns. An effective rehabilitation program will also help ensure that lands once devastated by unwanted wildfires will be restored to conditions that will prevent recurrences.

Steps taken to improve project treatment and rehabilitate burned areas with native seed often take several years before achieving a positive impact. For example, the results of a seeding may not be determined a success for two or three years. Results from longer-term rehabilitation will be monitored, reported, and used as the basis for future policy and treatment decisions. The expanded focus on monitoring of burned area rehabilitation projects will lead to an information base that will provide progressively more efficient and effective post-fire treatments. The lessons learned today will be maintained by the newly-established rehabilitation program staff which will be able to use them in reviewing, evaluating, approving and funding future projects.

Native Plant Material Development Project – Funding of \$4.6 million is available for the NPMD project in 2004. This is a pivotal year in the Great Basin Native Plant Selection and

Increase Project. Seed from many species that were investigated earlier in the project will be available for increase by local growers. Research will continue to provide many of the 25 forb species under development to growers. This project integrates several proposals previously prepared by Idaho, Utah, and Nevada BLM to increase native plant production and use within the Great Basin, utilizing an applied science approach in a collaborative project. This project represents a regional approach to native plant enhancement encompassing the entirety of the Great Basin, the largest block of public rangelands (75 million acres) in BLM. The project was prepared in part by members of the Great Basin Restoration Initiative workgroup and meets an important objective of the GBRI strategic plan, *Healing the Land 2000*.

Seed collecting through Seeds of Success will continue with first-year seed collecting taking place in Arizona and New Mexico. BLM will use partnerships with the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix and the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to collect in the southwest. The Carson City Field Office in NV and Pocatello Field Office in ID are also hosting SCA seed collecting teams. Fort Ord, California will host a fire, weed and seed collecting team through SCA; this team will work with the public on fire safety, weed awareness and also collect seed for restoration of yellow star thistle-infested lands. Seed collection with SCA will continue in Denver, CO, Bishop, CA, and Kanab, Utah. The BLM plans to grow out seed collected in 2003 for restoration of up to 200 acres of medusahead infested rangelands in Alturas, CA.

BLM continues to participate in the Mora River Watershed Project. Rural production of native plant materials provides economic opportunity to northern New Mexico communities. In February 2003, former New Mexico Governor David Cargo set up a public meeting in Mora to discuss the project with the community. Five growers planted seed in May 2003, and many more are interested in participating in 2004.

The Uncompahgre Plateau partnership will continue to work with partners to determine important forb species for rehabilitation and restoration and will increase seed grow out in two new locations.

Establishing a Baseline for Rehabilitation Performance

Burned Area Rehabilitation supports the Department's strategic plan by helping to restore lands that would not return to fire-adapted conditions without intervention. The performance measure adopted by the Department is "Percent of acres degraded by wildland fire with post-fire rehabilitation treatments underway, completed, or monitored." The number of acres receiving emergency stabilization and longer-term rehabilitation has been reported annually, however, determining the percentage is more complicated and has not been measured until now.

Stabilization is performed on all burned acres where there is danger to life, property, and natural resources – within one year of fire containment. Rehabilitation is performed on selected acres that would not be expected to recover without intervention – from one to three years after fire containment. Therefore, the percentage of acres receiving treatment in a year (use 2001 as an example) would be the acres treated and/or monitored in that year divided by the number of acres burned over the previous three years plus the acres burned in the current year (1998-2000 plus 2001). The resulting figure, 19%, reflects the combination of emergency stabilization and rehabilitation.

Not all acres burned by wildfire are in need of rehabilitation. Some areas benefit from wildfire and others will return to desirable conditions naturally.

Beginning in 2004, acres receiving stabilization treatment will be counted separately from acres receiving rehabilitation treatments. This will begin the development of accurate baselines for stabilization and rehabilitation. The first year with a full set of accurate rehabilitation data will be 2007.

The table below displays a wide range of acres receiving treatments from 2001 through 2003. Until accurate data for rehabilitation alone is developed, DOI is projecting the average of 2001 through 2003 for stabilization and rehabilitation (1,520,000 average acres treated divided by 8,090,000 average acres burned over 4 years = 19%) as the basis for 2004 projections.

The costs associated with providing rehabilitation treatments resist efforts to predict them. There are too many variables for available information and technology to provide a basis for a responsible projection of future costs at this time. Therefore, the designation of NA is used.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Average
Acres burned on DOI lands (in thousands)	525	3,063	2,549	1,502	2,161	1,145	8,090**
Acres on DOI lands receiving emergency stabilization or rehabilitation				1,432	767	2,361	1,520
Treated acres (stabilization plus rehabilitation) as a percent of burned acres *				1,432 7,639 = 19%	767 9,275 = 8%	2,361 7,357 = 32%	1,520 8,090 = 19%

* The percentage of burned acres that are treated is usually low because many acres are not degraded by wildfire and many acres can be expected to recover without intervention. Also, the Department tracks the number of burned acres, but not the subset of burned acres that are degraded.

** 8,090 is the average of number of acres burned in any given 4-year period from 2001-2003.

Burned Area Rehabilitation Performance Summary

DOI Strategic Goal: Resource Protection							
End Outcome Goal: Improve the health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources that are DOI managed or influenced in a manner consistent with obligations regarding the allotment and use of water.							
Intermediate Outcome Goal 1: Restore and maintain proper function to watersheds and landscapes.							
Outcome Measures:	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Planned: Budget Just- ifications	2004 Planned: Revised Final	2005 Planned	Change in Perfor- mance (2004 : 2005)	2008 Long Term Target
Percent of acres degraded by wildland fire with post-fire rehabilitation treatments underway, completed, or monitored (SP: PIM.1.01.001)	<u>766,973</u> 9,275,000 = 8% *	<u>2,360,934</u> 7,357,000 = 32%	TBD	<u>1,520,00</u> 8,090,00 = 19%	20%	+1%	20%
Average gross costs per acre for burned acres with emergency stabilization and rehabilitation.(\$) (10-Year Plan)	<u>\$61.22m*</u> 766,973 = \$80	<u>\$39.27m</u> 2,360,934 = \$17	TBD	NA	NA	NA	NA
Primary Outputs funded by this subactivity:							
Apply Fire Rehabilitation Treatments (acres)	766,973	2,360,934	TBD	NA	NA	NA	NA
Acres degraded by wildland fire on DOI-managed land (NK)	2,287,066	1,144,536	TBD	NA	NA	NA	NA

* Actual obligations for 2002 and 2003, excluding NPMD funding.

ACTIVITY: STATE AND LOCAL ASSISTANCE**SUBACTIVITY: RURAL FIRE ASSISTANCE**

(\$000)

Bureau		2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Uncontrol- lable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Inc(+) Dec(-) from 2004
Rural Fire Assistance	\$	9,935	9,877	0	-4,877	5,000	-4,877
BLM	\$	5,931	5,896	0	-2,911	2,985	-2,911
BIA	\$	1,232	1,225	0	-605	620	-605
FWS	\$	1,232	1,225	0	-605	620	-605
NPS	\$	1,540	1,531	0	-756	775	-756

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

This program provides provides financial support to local and rural fire protection districts that protect small communities. These local firefighting agencies often provide a critical service in helping meet protection needs for wildland urban interface areas threatened by wildfire. Funds provided by cost-shared grants are used for engines and other initial attack equipment, communication equipment, training and other related support.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Rural Fire Assistance supports the Serving Communities mission goal from the Department's draft Strategic Plan by providing protection of lives, resources and property from wildland fire. The RFA program strives to enhance community fire protection capacity and improve safety to firefighters and the public. This goal will be achieved by assisting small rural fire departments with technical and financial support to procure equipment and training and to implement prevention activities within wildland urban interface (WUI) communities.

Rural fire departments play a major role in increasing initial attack success, decreasing fire suppression costs and reducing the loss of homes and natural resources from unwanted wildland fire. RFD's initiate nearly 90% of all initial attacks on wildland fires across the United States. Firefighters successfully contained over 97% of wildland fire starts at less than 300 acres in 2002 and 2003.

The Departments of Agriculture and the Interior are proposing to combine Wildland Fire Management state and local assistance programs into a new budget activity, State and Local Assistance. The DOI program that fits in this new activity is the established RFA program which provides financial support to local and rural fire protection districts that protect small

communities. The RFA program is focused on improving preparedness and prevention capacity for communities near lands that are managed by DOI bureaus. The program provides technical and financial support to fire departments that protect communities with populations of less than 10,000. These local firefighting agencies often provide a critical service in helping meet protection needs for wildland urban interface areas threatened by wildfire and are often the first line of defense against unwanted wildland fire. Fires move from forest, brush, or grassland into communities or from communities into adjacent wildland. Either way, community involvement is a key element in reducing fire hazards near communities and in restoring damaged landscapes. Community assistance programs focus on building community capacity to develop and carry out citizen-driven solutions that will lessen community vulnerability to risks associated with wildland fire.

Community Assistance programs are designed to assist small wildland urban interface communities through building community protection capabilities, removing hazardous fuel from non-Federal lands, and facilitating and fostering sustainable community development. In addition, field offices work closely with rural fire districts in the areas of planning, risk mitigation, and training, especially in the wildland urban interface areas adjacent to Federal land boundaries. The Department of the Interior also helps communities implement community-based projects, such as FIREWISE and fuels management practices, to reduce fire risk and enhance local and small business employment opportunities.

2003 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Congress appropriated \$10 million in 2003 for the Rural Fire Assistance program. Grants were awarded to 1,400 rural fire departments providing technical assistance, training, supplies, equipment, and public education support, thus enhancing firefighter safety and strengthening wildland fire protection capabilities. RFA funds are matched on a 90/10 split; the recipients must contribute a minimum of 10 percent in dollars or in-kind services and are party to a cooperative fire agreement or reciprocal fire protection agreement.

Assistance provided to communities in 2003 supported education programs, community protection planning, risk mitigation, training and equipping fire fighters, purchasing equipment or treating vegetation and landscapes around communities. Community assistance efforts emphasized working together at all levels of government and encouraging active participation from citizens and landowners.



North Routt Fire Protection District officials receive the keys to the fire engine obtained through BLM's Rural Fire Assistance program in Colorado.

Examples of RFA-supported activities in 2003 included:

- The State of Wyoming, BLM North Zone hosted training for rural fire departments. Using six instructors, they delivered essential fire training to a total of 110 students from ten different communities. Students participated in over 160 hours of classroom and field training provided by BLM using RFA funds. Twenty-five students were given the knowledge and skill to become first-time red carded firefighters. With the qualified cadre of local instructors, sixteen 100 and 200 level National Wildfire Coordinating Group courses were successfully completed.
- FWS administered a \$10,500 grant to the Bethel Volunteer Fire Department in Bethel, AK, located adjacent to Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. The funds were used to provide basic wildland firefighter training to 14 new firefighters and to purchase personal protective equipment, tools, and miscellaneous fire equipment for the department.
- The Carson City, Nevada BLM Field Office funded purchases of safety equipment, tools and training to 19 RFD's, for a total of \$220,000.

2004 PLANNED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

The DOI fire management bureaus will provide \$9,877,000 this year to rural fire departments in the form of competitive grants for equipment and firefighter training necessary for safe and effective wildland fire response. These grants are cost-shared with the recipient communities providing a match of 10% of the cost. The RFA program differs from Forest Service grant programs in that Interior bureaus focus on smaller communities without the local resources to meet the 50% Forest Service match requirement. Major accomplishments will include:

- Supporting over 3,200 rural and volunteer fire departments to further enhance seamless delivery of wildland fire protection across land boundaries through cooperative fire assistance agreements.
- Providing financial assistance to approximately 1,400 rural and volunteer fire departments.
- Finalizing a Department-wide policy manual and handbook.
- Providing a mechanism for coordinating and tracking the allocation of rural fire assistance, long-term program planning, enhanced program accomplishment tracking, and comprehensive interagency coordination.

In 2004, the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) will develop an action plan based on the issues and recommendations contained in their report to Congress, the *"Changing Role and Needs of Local, Rural, and Volunteer Fire Departments in the Wildland Urban Interface"* report.

JUSTIFICATION OF 2005 PROGRAM CHANGES**2005 PROGRAM CHANGES**

	2005 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
\$(000)	\$5,000	-\$4,877

The FY 2005 budget request for Rural Fire Assistance is \$5,000,000, a program decrease of \$4,877,000 from the 2004 estimated level. This will enable assistance to be provided to 700 rural/volunteer fire districts in wildland urban interface areas near Department of the Interior lands that may not qualify for or receive funding from USDA Forest Service Volunteer Fire Assistance or U.S. Fire Administration. These rural fire districts are often the first line of defense on wildland fire on lands managed by DOI bureaus.

To better reflect fire program needs, emphasis in 2005 will be placed on local firefighter training and certification, and less on equipment purchases that may be provided through USDA or FEMA programs.

Rural Fire Assistance Performance Summary

DOI Strategic Goal: Serve Communities							
End Outcome Goal: Protect lives, resources and property.							
Intermediate Outcome Goal 1: Improved fire management.							
Outcome Measures:	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Planned: Budget Just- ifications	2004 Planned: Revised Final	2005 Planned	Change in Perfor- mance (2004 : 2005)	2008 Long Term Target
Damage to communities and the environment from severe, unplanned and unwanted wildland fire are reduced (SP: SEM.1.003) *	UNK	UNK	UNK	UNK	TBD	UNK	TBD
Primary Outputs funded by this subactivity:							
Fire education and prevention programs completed. (NK)	100	100	100	100	50	-50	TBD
Rural Fire Departments receiving financial assistance. (NK)	1,568	1,400	1,400	1,400	700	700	TBD
Reciprocal fire protection agreements with Rural or Volunteer Fire Departments. (NK)	3,223	3,223	3,223	3,223	3,223	0	3,223

- This measure requires further study and analysis. Damage to communities and the environment from wildfires is difficult to express in numerical terms because it includes economic damage to property and incomes, as well as non-economic resource damage.

**PROGRAM/PROJECT SUPPORT OF BUREAU, DEPARTMENT,
AND GOVERNMENT-WIDE COSTS**

Section 343 of the *2004 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* includes the following new requirement for disclosure of overhead, administrative and other types of spending:

Section 343. Estimated overhead charges, deductions, reserves or holdbacks from programs, projects and activities to support governmentwide, departmental, agency or bureau administrative functions or headquarters, regional or central office operations shall be presented in annual budget justifications. Changes to such estimates shall be presented to the Committees on Appropriations for approval.

Section 343 refers to the category of “indirect costs” as defined by the bureaus. The following definitions of direct and indirect costs, as approved by OMB, are used by the wildland fire management program to report its overhead charges:

Direct Costs - Direct costs are costs that can be identified with the delivery of a specific program or a program’s output. Direct costs include expenses, including salaries, travel, and supplies, associated with employees working directly on the production of an output. Program management is an integral cost of the production of an output and therefore is included as a direct cost. Such direct costs may also include office and other facility space rentals, utilities, computer equipment, supplies, equipment and other materials directly attributable to the production of outputs. These direct costs are not considered to be overhead.

Indirect Costs – Indirect costs include expenses that are necessary for the operation of the Department’s programs but are not attributable to any specific outputs. Examples may include cost pools for general management salaries and support, strategic planning, budget, procurement, contracting, information technology, and other administrative services. Provision of these services by the bureaus enables the WFM program to avoid potentially higher costs of acquiring these services independently.

The Department limits indirect overhead charges to the Wildland Fire Management program to a maximum of 10% of the appropriations for Preparedness and Hazardous Fuels Reduction. Appropriations for emergency fire suppression, emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, and grants to rural fire departments are exempt from overhead charges. Interior’s National Fire Plan partner, the USDA Forest Service, has a 20% overhead limit.

The Department and the four WFM bureaus have exercised restraint in the amounts they charge this program. Until this year, each of the bureaus has charged less than the maximum allowable percentage. However, rising costs to the bureaus for administrative services and systems is putting pressure on them to seek a higher level of support. The Bureau of Land Management and Fish and Wildlife Service, in particular, have expressed concern that the actual costs for administrative services may be exceeding 10%. The BLM is in the process of evaluating their costs to see if an increase in the limit is warranted.

The Wildland Fire Management appropriation account is not directly billed by the Department's Working Capital Fund. Instead, the four fire management bureaus are allowed to pass a portion of their WCF costs to WFM as part of the overhead they charge for bureau indirect support provided to the WFM program.

The costs to the program for its management and policy personnel and offices are considered direct program costs and as such are borne fully by the account. Examples of the positions and offices fitting this category include the Office of Wildland Fire Coordination, the National Interagency Fire Center, field fire management officers, and incident management teams.

Estimated Maximum Wildland Fire Management Overhead Costs
(\$000)

	2003 Actual	2004 Estimate	Budgeted Uncon- trollable Change	Budgeted Program Change	2005 Request
Total Appropriation	650,152	685,177	+2,691	+55,231	743,099
Preparedness	275,411	274,303	+2,227	+6,488	283,018
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	185,627	183,896	+386	+25,000	209,282
Subtotal subject to Overhead Charges	461,038	458,199	+2,613	+31,488	492,300
Maximum overhead charge	46,104	45,820	+261	+3,149	49,230

Analysis of Budgetary Resources for 2005 Budget Justification

<u>Account: Wildland Fire Management</u>	2003 Actual BA	2004 Estimate	2005 Request	Dec. (-) Inc. (+) from 2004
Account Total				
BA Available for Obligation:				
Appropriation	879,406	792,725	743,099	-49,626
Net BA transfers	-24,500	-134,416	0	+134,416
Unobligated balance, Start of year	117,731	137,234	82,411	-54,823
Recoveries of Prior Year Obligations	39,841	40,000	40,000	+0
Spending authority from offsetting collections (gross)	36,317	30,000	30,000	+0
Minus uncollected customer payments from Federal sources	2,501	0	0	+0
Minus enacted rescissions	-4,254	-9,132	0	+9,132
Total BA Available	1,047,042	856,411	895,510	+39,099
Less Obligations	909,808	774,000	773,000	-1,000
Unobligated balance, End of year	137,234	82,411	122,510	+40,099
<i>FTE [including FTEs associated with allocations]</i>	4,833	4,758	4,761	+3
<u>Activity: Reimbursable program [included in amounts above]</u>				
BA Available for Obligation:				
Appropriation	36,317	30,000	30,000	+0
Minus uncollected customer payments from Federal sources	2,501	0	0	+0
Unobligated balance, Start of year	8,741	22,731	8,731	-14,000
Total BA Available	47,559	52,731	38,731	-14,000
Less Obligations	24,828	44,000	30,000	-14,000
Unobligated balance, End of year	22,731	8,731	8,731	+0
<i>FTE</i>	57	57	57	+0

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